Interview: SAKHAROV, KGB, GRU, CIA!

ESPIONAGE®

August 1986

MAGAZINE

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JACK GERSON
Are There Any Secrets Left?

INTERVIEW:
ROBERT LITTELL

JOHN CAMP
Espionage in Wartime London

JOHN F. DOBBYN
Deadly Score

EDWARD D. HOCH
JACK PETREE
DAVID R. URBACH
STUART SYMONS

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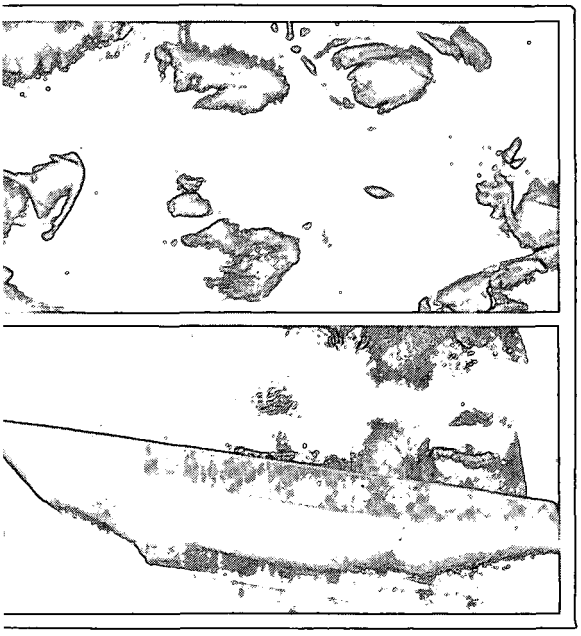
TAKE A NEW LOOK



AT THE PHENOMENA OF LIFE.
THE GOOD, BAD, BEAUTIFUL, AND UGLY.
THE NATURAL, UNNATURAL, AND SUPERNATURAL.
THE HEROIC, AND VILLAINOUS.
THE ADVENTUROUS, BIZARRE, AND THE GLAMOROUS.

NEW LOOK

AN EXTRAORDINARY NEW MAGAZINE FROM BOB GUCCIONE.

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Publisher's Page

A strange thing happened on the way to our subscription house the other day. . .

A person with sawdust for brains mailed out 1700 subscription renewal forms with our Anniversary Issue; instead of those people who should have received the forms, hundreds more who *shouldn't* have received them did. We're still not sure if that number included *at least* those whom we would have liked to notify that it was "time" to renew. . .

Anyway, here was this really gross error (the *last straw* as far as the company who employs the person is concerned) that elicited comments from some of our brand new subscribers like "What are you trying to pull here? I ordered a new subscription, got one copy, and already I have to renew?" "Is this one copy all I'm going to get on my new subscription?" "There must have been an error made; I've only received one issue on my new subscription and already you're after me to renew," and so on and on and on. . . a few letters nasty, assuming we were up to no good! Naturally, as you might suppose, most people assumed an error had been made and just ignored the renewal letters that did not pertain to them. But, those who didn't spent time and money to tell us/ask us about it.

So we wrote a letter to all our subscribers, in which we apologized for the goof and laid the responsibility for it right where it belonged. . . because we'd had dealings with that person before and that person had really done a job on us in the past. I guess you could say it was the last straw for us, too!

Anyway, if you received either the renewal form or the apology letter incorrectly—or both—perhaps this explains a little better what's been going on here. And if you think we're kidding about your letters, turn to our *Letters to The Editor* column this month where we've printed two very divergent opinions on the apology letter we sent out. So, not only can't you win them all. . .you can't hardly win any of them!

Otherwise, the thing I wanted to tell you this issue is exactly (well, almost exactly) *who you are.* Perhaps I should say *who you were,* since the following is the result of our readership survey done back in our

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ESPIONAGE®
MAGAZINE
AUGUST 1986
VOLUME 2 ISSUE

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November 1985 issue, and some of you weren't part of that survey. Ready?

You're male, between the ages of 25 and 44, single (though almost as many of you are married), college educated, employed full-time in a variety of interesting professions, i.e., security, the military, psychology, engineering. More of you rent than own your own homes (not too many more) which probably accounts for the fact that more of you live in a city than its environs. You travel a lot, own lots of fun equipment, but seem to prefer outdoor sports (fishing, hiking, etc.) to indoor. You all read espionage novels, probably they and *we* are what you read while you're traveling. You seem to like us pretty well, too: 100% of you said you'd recommend us to a friend. Not bad!

Now, if we were trying to sell you advertising, we'd give you the above in the following way: THE HIGHLIGHTS OF ESPIONAGE DEMOGRAPHICS ARE:

— The male/female split is 70% male and 30% female.
— 62% are unmarried.
— The age range is 39% under 34, 24% between 35 and 44, and the balance of 37% are over 45. The majority of readers are in the 25-44 age group.
— 72% are college educated.
— 60% earn between $30,000 and $75,000 annually.
— 48% own their own residences.
— 56% live in urban areas.
— 80% are employed full-time.
— One out of 4 is in top management and one out of 3 is in technical occupations. Now do you know who you are? The fun part is that we do, too. Thanks for taking the time to fill out the questionnaire and return it to us.

Jackie Lewis

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ABOUT. . . People

JACK PETREE, usually a non-fiction writer (he's had hundreds of magazine articles published in magazines as well known as SPORTS ILLUSTRATED) has tried his hand at fiction for the now defunct MIKE SHAYNE MYSTERY MAGAZINE, and for us. We're glad he came to us.

JOHN CAMP, British born and bred, has a wife who is a pharmacist, a son who is an attorney, and has been a full-time writer since 1970. Prior to "fun" features, John was a medical writer with the Wellcome Foundation in London. While on loan to the U.S. 1st Army during WWII, he was awarded the American Bronze Star for psychological warfare work resulting in the capture of Cherbourg.

Another British subject, **JACK GERSON**, hails from Glasgow, Scotland. His latest book, *Back of the Tiger*, was published early last year by Beaufort Books, and Jack was in California about that time working on a movie. He's produced six novels over the years, and has been an important writer for British TV for 20 years.

STUART SYMONS is Professor of Albanian and Romanian at Cameron University in Oklahoma. As "himself," George Edward Stanley, he's best known for his children's short stories and books, including the recent *The Crime Lab*) published by Avon Camelot Books). He is an active member of both the "Society of Children's Book Writers" and "The Mystery Writers of America". . .and a very dear friend of ESPIONAGE.

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ABOUT. . .
Books

by Brian L. Burley

ON TERRORISM AND COMBATING TERRORISM, Edited by Ariel Merari. Published by University Publications of America, Inc., Frederick, MD, 1985. HB, 188 pp.

The 1979 International Seminar on Political Terrorism brought together in Israel top academic experts on the subject of terrorism and key public officials from several countries involved in combatting it. This book contains lectures and discussions from that conference, all in a rarefied, highly academic tone. Although there is a great deal of interesting and useful material here, it is extremely difficult to extract. There are 17 independent sections, each representing one session of the conference. The author of the initial paper of each section is identified, but the participants are not, except in a consolidated list at the beginning. There are no conclusions presented for most of the sections, and none is attempted for the conference overall. The most valuable thing in the book is an extremely precise definition of the problem: there is little or no agreement on solutions.

My own summary would be: 1) Terrorists have little or no interest in accomplishing their stated goals, and undertake their actions to embarrass the governments they deal with. 2) Reducing media coverage will probably result in an increase of severity and frequency of terrorist events as the terrorists attempt to attract the media's attention. 3) In all likelihood, everything that can be done is being done, and no changes of the various national policies are indicated. 4) Terrorism is not a really serious problem: it is blown out of proportion by those who would "sell their country for a headline," and, in fact, fewer people die of terrorism than automobile accidents, even in the Middle East.

* * *

INSIDE SOVIET MILITARY INTELLIGENCE, by Viktor Suvorov. Published by McMillan, New York, NY, 1984. HB, 193 pp.

Contrary to the common perceptions presented in contem-

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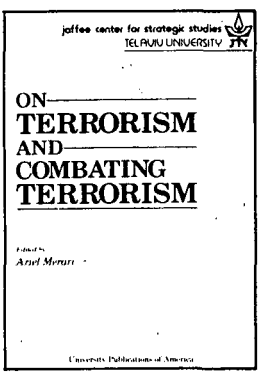
porary spy fiction, the GRU, the Soviet Military intelligence organization, is not a despicable poor relation of the KGB. Rather, according to the author of this slim history and description of the GRU, it is the second most powerful intelligence agency in the world, intended by Lenin to be a counterbalance to the ancestors of the KGB. Suvorov, a former high level operational agent in the GRU, devotes the majority of the book to supporting that statement.

According to Suvorov, the purpose of the KGB is to "prevent the collapse of the Soviet Union from inside," and the purpose of the GRU is to "prevent the collapse of the Soviet Union from an external blow." This explains, for example, why the KGB is very visible, both in the Soviet Union and abroad: part of the function of the KGB is to terrorize the population into compliance with the will of the Communist Party. The more horrible its reputation, the more effective it can be at that task. Since the GRU is the agency with the most contact with foreigners, especially those outside of the Soviet Union, it would be injured by such a reputation, and therefore keeps a very low profile. All of this makes a great deal of sense, and is very consistent with other recent books on the internal structure and methods of the Soviet Union. Recommended.

* * *

THE RATIONALIZATION OF TERRORISM, Edited by David C. Rapoport and Yonah Alexander. Published by University Publications of America, Inc., Frederick, MD, 1982. HB, 233 pp.



Like *ON TERRORISM AND COMBATTING TERRORISM,* reviewed above, this is the transcription of an academic seminar held in 1979. This one was held at UCLA. The format of the book is similar to that of its companion. A number of diverse authors present papers, which are followed by discussion. Despite the similarities, however, the subjects are very different, and some of the annoying format flaws of the other book are absent here. Very few people would disagree with the necessity to fight terrorism. The question of justification of terrorism is, however, open to a much wider set opinions. The participants in this conference are almost exclusively

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from the academic establishment, and so tend to have similar background assumptions.

The first papers presented, those by A.R. Louch and Lawrence C. Freedman, are particularly offensive, giving an initial negative impression of the book. Both of these authors seem to define terrorists as those who fight against institutions that the authors believe in (or institutions the authors believe are universal, and thus above criticism). Both present their cases in "academic" language with big words and little content, language which in some cases is sufficiently convoluted to remind me of some of my advanced college philosophy texts. However, even those authors who are attempting to present a balanced, intellectually honest thesis, such as A. James Gregor, tend to be more tolerant of, or more ignorant of, the terrorist activities of the Right than of those of the Left. Although many interesting points are made, especially in the discussion sections, we have been well exposed to this general viewpoint in the past. I see no reason for recommending another dose.

* * *

SCIMITAR, by Peter Niesewand. Published by New American Library, a Signet Book, New York, NY, Nov., 1985. PB, 574 pp.

One of the enduring concepts in our field is the rivalry between the Soviet KGB and the Soviet military intelligence unit, the GRU. The early parts of this novel explore a similar distrust between the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency. DIA chief General Yardley does not trust CIA handling of an important Soviet defector. He assigns crack agent Major Clive Lyle and rookie David Ross to protect the national interest. In the course of the book, Ross becomes fully vetted as an agent as he and Lyle foil massive Soviet efforts to interfere with their mission.

This is a long and complex novel. It pivots on a realistic secret hinted at but not revealed by the defector. In order to uncover the true nature of the suggested Soviet activities, it is necessary for Ross and Lyle to travel to Afghanistan and join up with rebels fighting the Soviet invasion. Afghanistan and its people are painted with a grim brutality that gives the full sense of an alien culture. My only objection to the book is that the major subplot, although useful in illustrating the personalities of the characters and their relationship with the DIA, does not contribute to the final solu-

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tion. Even with this minor quibble, and the fact that this is a long read, I really enjoyed this one. Highly recommended.

* * *

A GRAVE FOR A RUSSIAN, by Charles C. Vance. Published by Avon Books, New York, NY, November, 1985. PB, 234 pp.

Mikhail Karlov had a good reason to sneak into the Soviet Union: revenge on the man who had killed his mother and caused his father to be imprisoned. And the CIA had a good reason for helping him do it: Karlov was a well trained agent, and there were a lot of other things he could do while he was there. With the aid of a Turkish submarine, a SCUBA outfit, and a well placed bomb, he enters the Ukraine and makes contact with the Ukrainian underground army, the UPA.

Things do not go well for the Soviets in this one. The UPA is highly organized and has infiltrated everywhere, to the extent that Karlov has only to express a desire for something and the UPA deus-ex-machina provides it. None of this is plausible, but it's a lot of fun. The book is well written, and if some of the characters are cardboard, they are a good grade of cardboard, and the fast pace makes up for it. Recommended.

* * *

TRACE: PIGS GET FAT, by Warren Murphy. Published by New American Library, a Signet Book, New York, NY, October, 1985. PB, 252 pp.

Trace, aka Devlin Tracy, is a wiseass, cynical insurance investigator who gets involved in all sorts of unsavory messes, which his beautiful, intelligent, wiseass girlfriend Michiko frequently has to help him out of. In this one, the sixth of the series, a wealthy real-estate wheeler-dealer buys a large insurance policy and promptly disappears. Trace reluctantly investigates, and finds himself on a murder case.

The plot is one of the oldest and most straight-forward in detective fiction. The appropriate villains are unveiled, because simple investigation has shown unexpected motive and connection, and all is revealed in a classic Nero Wolfe-style gathering at the end. Unlike a Wolfe novel, however, the clues are visible early on, although they are presented so casually I didn't notice them. What carries this novel is the characters of Trace and Michiko. I enjoyed them, and found them worth an evening.

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LIME'S CRISIS, by Ronald Bass. Published by New American Library, a Signet book, New York, NY, October, 1985. PB, 351 pp.

Harry Lime's world ended when Jenny left him, and his life had been on automatic pilot since then. He hadn't trusted the government since he'd left the Agency under a cloud, so it came as a shock to him that the new President's closest advisor wanted him to take on a top secret negotiation with the fate of the country at stake. He took it anyway, on his terms, to fill the emptyness. But he still didn't trust them.

This book is the story of how Harry solved his personal crisis, and the world's. The character of Harry Lime is well done, and there are poignant moments throughout. The story is fast paced although not heavily action-oriented. It reveals to us several plausible conspiracies, and provides a small mystery as to the identity of the conspirators. Harry ultimately engages in a conspiracy of his own with his Soviet opposite number, and eventually, with the aid of a bit of blackmail, a reasonable solution to a real-life problem is put in place. Not the most memorable book I've seen recently, but a good read, and I do like the solution. Recommended.

* * *

Second Thoughts

In an earlier issue, I gave a negative review to THE SETUP, by Vladimir Volkoff. Since then, I have found my thoughts returning to the sheer human tragedy of the central character, Aleksandr Psar. I still think the book is slow and pedantic, but the characterization is a redeeming virtue. To be honest with myself, I must give it at least a minor recommendation.

Did you know...

Vienna is the spy capital of the world—with up to 20,000 spies at large at any one time—the elite of whom haunt the cafés and coffee shops along the Graben.

Austrian intelligence chiefs are not too perturbed. It's nice to know where they can be picked up if necessary without too much leg-work. And if they are spying on each other, why should the Austrians waste money and manpower spoiling the fun? They only move in when the spies are disturbing the country's own national security, commerce or trade.

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ABOUT. . .
Other Things

by Ernest Volkman

The Strange Case of the Ghanian Spy

On the surface, the case seemed routine enough: U.S. Customs agents in Newark, N.J., arrested three men on charges of conspiring to purchase $250,000 worth of military equipment—including grenade launchers and other small arms—and then smuggle it to Africa.

But the case was anything but routine, and in fact represented a key move in an intricate game of international espionage with important ramifications.

To understand a somewhat complicated case, it is necessary to go back to last July, when a CIA aide named Sharon Scranage, a 29-year-old black American woman, faced the ordeal of an agency lie detector test. Her superiors already suspected her of passing on agency secrets, and the polygraph was designed to clinch the case. As they suspected, Ms. Scranage flunked the test, and under further questioning, admitted that while based in the West African nation of Ghana from December, 1983, to May, 1985, as a CIA "operations support assistant," she passed on CIA secrets. And not just any secrets, for among the material were the names of CIA "assets" [native Africans working for the CIA].

Her betrayal was to cost the lives of several men, including several important CIA assets in Ghana, at least six military officers in Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), and a fairly long list of other assets who suddenly disappeared. In short, her betrayal was a disaster to the CIA.

How had it happened? Ms. Scranage, it turned out, had become involved in the most classic scenario of all espionage. Unmarried and plain, she was an easy target for the attentions of a man named Michael Agbouti Soussoudis, a suave, handsome 39-year-old businessman. Soussoudis swept her off her feet, and before long, Ms. Scranage was revealing to him all sorts of interesting items. Soussoudis absorbed all this with some attention, for he did not mention to his paramour that he was not only the first cousin to Jerry Rawlings, Ghana's dictator,

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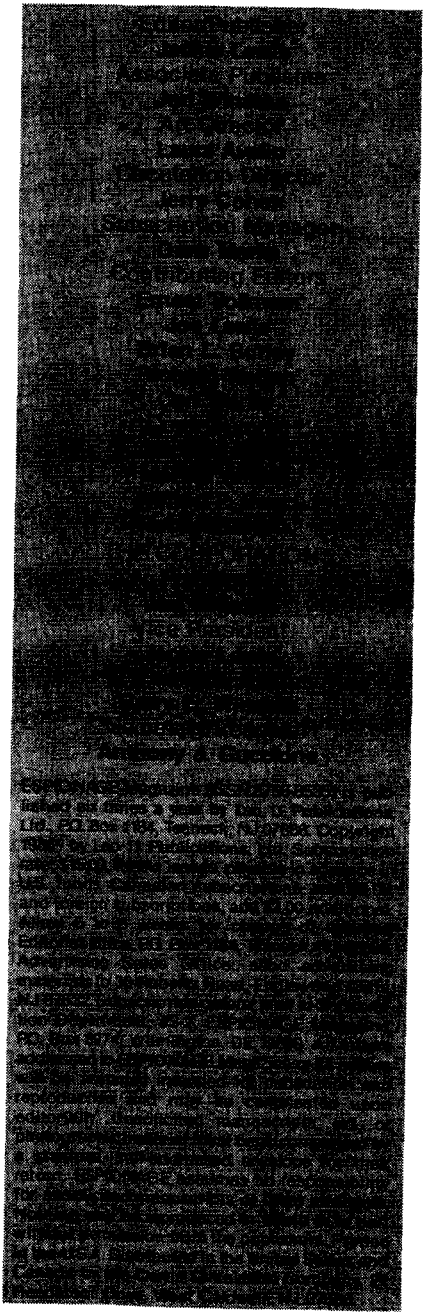

he was also an informant for the Ghanian intelligence service.

CIA operations throughout West Africa soon began to show the unmistakable signs of a high-level leak, and when suspicion focused on Ms. Scranage, she was confronted and she confessed. She did, however, perform one small service as partial atonement: working with the FBI, she agreed to lure her lover to this country, where, during a clandestine meeting between them that was monitored by the FBI, Soussoudis was arrested for espionage.

But the story did not end there. As a result of Ms. Scranage's betrayal, a dozen assets were languishing in Ghanian prisons. The CIA wanted them out. Thus, the beginnings of an intricate deal: Soussoudis was given a 20-year suspended prison term, then deported. In exchange, Ghana released eight Ghanians described delicately as "friendly to the interests of the United States." But there were still six other assets the CIA wanted, and to get those, a further refinement of the deal was arranged.

Which brings us to those U.S. Customs arrests mentioned earlier. The arrested men, it developed, were all associated with the Ghana Democratic Movement, a prominent anti-Rawlings exile group that has vowed to overthrow him. Clearly, their arrests represented the rest of the deal: in exchange for the Americans cracking down on Rawlings' chief opponents, he

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would release the remaining assets from prison.

Now, the deal has been done. What it all meant is simply another demonstration of the acute cynicism of modern espionage. Oh, and what about Ms. Scranage? Despite the seriousness of her offense, she was given a relatively mild five-year prison sentence. She's expected to serve about a third of that sentence. Then, like just about everybody else in this little story, she'll disappear into obscurity.

Moscow Needs Some Lessons

Despite all the talk about the perfidy of Soviet forgeries, a favorite KGB tactic, there is cause to wonder just how effective those forgeries are.

Indeed, most of the forgeries contain so many dead giveaways, it is a wonder the Russians bother to keep churning out the stuff. Some of the recent products, for example, make the colossal error of referring to the CIA and other American intelligence agencies as "competent bodies," a distinctly Russian term that refers to intelligence organizations. Others have the bad habit of spelling "center" as "centre," betraying their European origin.

These and other mistakes tend to undercut what appear to be otherwise elaborately-prepared forgeries, usually in the form of alleged top-secret Pentagon or State Department documents. There have been occasional successes for the KGB in this exercise, but overall, astonishing errors have made recipients increasingly wary about accepting at face value "top secret" American documents.

Where was the KGB's Warning?

A relatively low-level KGB official defected in Greece recently, and although the range of his knowledge wasn't extensive, he was aware of one important tidbit: an American based in London was giving Moscow military secrets. It didn't take long for the sleuths to track down a retired U.S. Navy officer, living in London, as the culprit. But what puzzles both British and American counterespionage officials is why the KGB did not warn its source of impending doom. Obviously, once the KGB became aware of the defection of its man in Greece, it must have been aware that he would reveal its London source. Routinely, there are "damage limitation" measures taken after every defection: any source that the defector might compromise is immediately warned and taken out of harm's way.

Why didn't the Russians do it in this case? Nobody seems to know.

Rumbles in France

There's more trouble brewing in the ranks of the DGSE, the main French intelligence service. Already tattered by the Greenpeace bombing case—which led to the dismissal of its director—the DGSE is now racked by internal

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dissension over the alleged incompetence of its new chief, General Rene Imbot.

The main source of trouble seems to be a conviction among many officials of the service that Imbot, eager to refurbish the DGSE's tarnished image, especially with the Americans and British, has been bending over backwards to be accommodating to the allies.

Too accommodating, say some, citing the matter of Western intelligence's darkest secret, known as TOTEM. The expression is a code word covering an elaborate secrets-sharing agreement among the Western intelligence agencies. Imbot, so the complaint goes, has been giving away the family jewels and getting almost nothing in return from the American CIA and the British MI6. To redress the balance, they're pushing for a new director who will not be quite so accommodating.

The Yurchenko Saga (continued)

Remember Vitali Yurchenko, the high-ranking KGB man who suddenly changed his mind and went back to Moscow? Little has been heard about him since, naturally, but some high-level Russian sources have been dropping hints that perhaps not all is well with the man who changed his mind.

According to those hints, Yurchenko is "very ill," an ailment caused, they whisper, by "poisoned lobster soup" fed to him by the CIA while he was in the agency's custody. Further, they hint, even more ominously, Yurchenko is suffering from "brain damage."

Translated, that might mean that Yurchenko has been put into a psychiatric hospital, one of the KGB's favorite methods of disposing of inconvenient humanity.

PBS on Espionage

Now in the works is a multi-part series by the Public Broadcasting Service on a history of American espionage. Although only in the developmental stage at the moment, its producers are hoping to get Bill Moyers to narrate and host the series.

Did you know...

One of the fiendish plots of London's back-room boffins in World War II was to sabotage a consignment of shirts on its way to U-Boat crews with a virulent new itching powder.

The powder was sprinkled on the shirts by a Special Operations Executive working inside the shirt factory. It is said that one U-Boat surrendered in mid-ocean because the crew appeared to have contracted a new and alarming form of dermatitis.

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LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Dear Jackie:

I just wanted to congratulate you on the April issue of ESPIONAGE. Adam Hall's "Last Rites" is a classic Quiller tale in every sense of the word. I'd also like to express my gratitude for including material from *The Cold War File* in your GAMES section.

I was intrigued by Carl Martin's revelation in your "Video" feature that an Agent 117 thriller, *Murder for Sale,* is currently available on videocassette. The original theatrical title is *Pas de Roses Pour O.S.S. 117,* or *No Roses for O.S.S. 117* for its American release, limited as it was. Released by Valoria in 1968, the feature received a considerably wider distribution on television as *O.S.S. 117—Double Agent.*

Hubert Bonisseur de la Bath, *Agent O.S.S. 117,* so designated because he served with the O.S.S. during World War II and was assigned the code number 117, is the creation of the late Jean Bruce whose seventeen O.S.S. 117 thrillers registered sales exceeding 50,000,000 in Europe by 1965. Ironically, the series didn't appear in the U.S. *until* 1965, translated from French in Fawcett-Crest paperback editions. The first O.S.S. 117 book, *The Last Quarter Hour* (published in 1955 by Les Presses de la Cité, Paris), was also the first to surface in this country ten years later. The Fawcett-Crest edition of *The Last Quarter Hour* is notable in that it contains an endorsement by Pierre Salinger, who commented that President John F. Kennedy became interested in the books.

Intriguingly, the O.S.S. 117 series didn't really attain a large following in the U.S. and has been forgotten by espionage devotées. John Gavin, who portrayed 117 in *No Roses for O.S.S. 117,* was actually preceded in the role by American actor Kerwin Matthews (who appeared in the 1967 spy film, *The Viscount*) and Austrian actor Frederick Stafford (who co-starred with John Forsythe in Alfred Hitchcock's *Topaz*) between 1965 and 1968.

The lack of both a response from Bruce's Paris publishers and the availability (in the used market) of O.S.S. 117 titles prompted me, with much regret, to delete the series from *The Cold War File.*

I've offered the above in response to Mr. Martin's "mystery" remark as to the title. I hope all is well with you and the staff. For

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now, all best wishes.

Andy East
Louisville, KY

Dear Andy:

Thanks for the information. As usual, you're right there with the facts!

Dear Jackie Lewis:

I just received my first issue of ESPIONAGE—April '86. I must say it was really one of the best small magazines I've ever had the good fortune to read. I enjoyed the magazine from cover to cover, especially the "Knit Lady" story.

I just found out about your magazine through my club. All the stories were well-written and had just the right amount of humor, suspense and adventure throughout.

I work the third shift and it can be a long night without a good magazine. The stories are short enough so I can read a whole one before I have to go do something. Thanks a lot.

Oh, I noticed all your letters were from men. Come on, girls, where're your comments? Surely I'm not the only one who has any.

Patsy Lowrey LRN
Eustace, TX

Many thanks, kind lady. Read on; there are more of us!

Dear Ms. Lewis:

I've just received my second issue of ESPIONAGE—volume 2, issue 1. My first one was volume 1, issue 6, so that shows I am a Jane-come-lately to your splendid magazine. And after reading in your letter column all those intriguing hints about the stories I have missed, I want to get the five issues I missed! I am not even waiting to read this Anniversary Issue before writing to order those five.

I didn't ***know*** about your magazine until last September and it took until January for my subscription to produce any result. I almost lost faith in your very existence! I already had a sad experience with the abortive attempt to revive the SAINT Magazine two years ago, so the fact that you have reached volume 2 is most encouraging (the SAINT only managed three issues!).

Now that's issues 1,2,3,4, and 5 I want, and I hope we're both going to be together for years and years!

Yours in hope,
Lydia C. Litchfield
Dedham, MA

Dear Ms.—Lydia! We're friends already! If you had any idea of what those poor people at the SAINT had to go through, well, I'm sure your heart would go out to them just as ours has. It's a tough business and the truth of it is that unless you have millions to invest, you'd better have friends in the industry to help you out.

Dear Ms. Lewis:

Giving in to your relentless

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pressure in order to preserve sanity, and trying to outdo Mr. Miller as your most vocal fan, I now sit to write this letter praising your publication.

Firstly, Happy Anniversary! Sorry I didn't get you a present.

Secondly, I hope that you will keep in mind, while reading this, that I speak with six issues of experience and therefore weight my testimony accordingly.

Lastly, pros, cons, and sincere hopes. It's been a real treat watching ESPIONAGE grow and mature from the giggling, slobbering infant it once was *(God! Slobbering? Ed.)* to the adolescent teen that I think it now is. What once was a simple meager collection of short stories has matured to a virtuoso, indeed a masterpiece, of fine literature. You have accomplished what no one else has: You have made available to me on a bi-monthly basis that which I enjoyed before *only* when I could (which wasn't too often).

But. . . no paradise is devoid of poison ivy. My only—mark that word, then pat yourself on the back—complaint is that, in my view, there is not enough non-fiction. Perhaps those are the wrong words. There is not the amount of non-fiction needed to pacify me until the next issue. I find myself enjoying such sections as *About Other Things, On File, Spying Through Time,* and your scattered facts, but I feel the way I feel when I buy a large pizza but eat only until I'm half full: unsatisfied.

But beyond this petty discomfort, I find myself unable to justifiably criticize your publication. The columns: incredible (I particularly like the book review); the games: astounding; the stories: indescribable; the artwork and the layout (from the Publisher's Page to the ever-present OMNI ad on the back cover—which certainly is a tradition that must be maintained): it's. . . it's. . . like trying to describe the size of this glorious universe. You just can't do it.

Note that I described the magazine as an adolescent teenager—it still has a lot of growing to do, but I warn you: Don't grow *too* well and become a flawless adult. I don't want to O.D. on the excellence of ESPIONAGE, for if I do, I'm holding you personally responsible for any injuries resulting and I'll send you my hospital bill.

Brian Gibson
Wahpeton, ND

My word, Mr. Gibson, people will think we're writing these letters ourselves! Thanks.

Dear Sir/Madam:

Enclosed please find a money order for $15.00 US for six issues of ESPIONAGE Magazine. Please forward immediately to the above address.

Also, please note I am a member of the intelligence community and would not take kindly to misleading or deceptive claims

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and would take immediate action against you.

Dr. E.A. Burke
North Salem, NY

What can I say?

Jeri Winston & Jackie Lewis:

I have a new subscription to your magazine and have received two issues, February and April. I never received March *(There wasn't any March. Ed.)* I also have not read one yet. I received this little memo *(Refer to Publisher's Page. Ed.)* which I think is the nastiest thing I ever saw. I have shown it to several people and all agree it is very poor business. Please cancel my subscription immediately. I am also reporting you to the subscription company. I have never complained in my life about a magazine.

Pat Augdahl
Seattle, WA

This letter refers to the same item of business mail as does the following letter.

Dear Jeri & Jackie:

THANK YOU!!! What a great apology letter!

It had its exact planned effect. I had a good laugh, and wanted to say to you, "Hey, it's okay. No big deal."

I am one of those who just started a subscription—the check is in the mail(!)—and am already delighted with the magazine.

I do some writing myself—right now working on a thing for *The Equalizer* TV series—and am getting more than just a little interested in the genre.

Ooops, sorry. Your letter seems to encourage a chatty response. How about that? There are real people up there somewhere! Thanks again. And I'll renew!

Jim Grant
Wimberley, TX

What some people love, some people hate. . .That's why nobody sells 100% of anything they produce!

Dear Ms. Lewis:

It's always a pleasure to read the newest issue of ESPIONAGE and I eagerly await the release of each issue. I expected the Anniversary Issue to be something really special, and when I finished it, I was not disappointed. Not only is there more fiction than the February 1986 issue offers, but there are some pleasant surprises here which make it difficult to pick a favorite story.

True, it's not surprising that Van de Wetering's "Non-interference" is a very satisfactory yarn filled with mystery and suspense, featuring the two most likable heroes in suspense fiction. I expected this much because the first installment was so good. On the other hand, Ardath Mayhar's "Knit Lady" is a solid character also, intriguing due to her shrewdness and determination to best any foe and survive any situation. But it was a sur-

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prise to see Hall's Quiller short story. Hall's smooth style of writing and his always fascinating hero diverted my attention so that the story's end took me unawares.

As good as Hall, Mayhar and Van de Wetering are, J.N. Williamson's "Risk Taking" is probably the best story here, because it reminded me sharply of an old favorite tale of mine called "The Mentor," by Dennis Hamilton (ESPIONAGE, February 1985). Other, very honorable mentions, include "Werewolf" (probably Waldman's best story yet) and Pachter's new tale which depicts the successful struggle of a man clinging to his self-pride. And let's not forget Parker and Hoch for their notable efforts, or, for that matter, Wilmot's very good tale, "Finger of Suspicion." Ron Goulart's humor has improved compared to his last story's forced laughs, and I was only mildly disappointed in Transier's story, which featured a good plot idea inadequately developed.

With the ULTRA article, Ernest Volkman has established himself as the best non-fiction writer in ESPIONAGE. It's well written and as absorbing as (his book) *The Warriors of The Night.* The Volkman/Hunter interview is excellent also. Hunter is a thoughtful and intelligent man whose novel, *The Spanish Gambit,* makes him one of my favorite writers. But it was ESPIONAGE who clued me in to his work from the announcement in the February issue. Joe Lewis glimpses the interesting Civil War years and I hope he'll return his attention to the period in future articles. Walton's "On File. . ." effort is very good also.

It's a shame that Brian Burley found some disappointing novels this time, when the excellent new Len Deighton novel has just been published. Perhaps next year, Burley can compile a list of the year's best in espionage fiction, with brief comments.

This issue features the best artwork to appear in your magazine thus far. The Murayama cover illustration is enhanced by its black background, the interior art is sharp, clear and original. I was flattered when my letter made your pages and provoked some comment from another reader. I stand by my original comments, however: The cover of February 1985 didn't arouse me; I simply thought that the depiction of a partially nude woman belongs on the cover of Mickey Spillane novels, not on ESPIONAGE covers.

I look forward to another successful issue and hope also that you have more writer interviews in the works.

David Miller
Bethel Park, PA

Aside from the fact that dear Mr. Miller keeps us in lovingly critical letters, he reminds me of Jack Paar's Mrs. Miller. . . remember her? She always spoke her mind and was always there for him as a fan. As always, thanks Mr. Miller.

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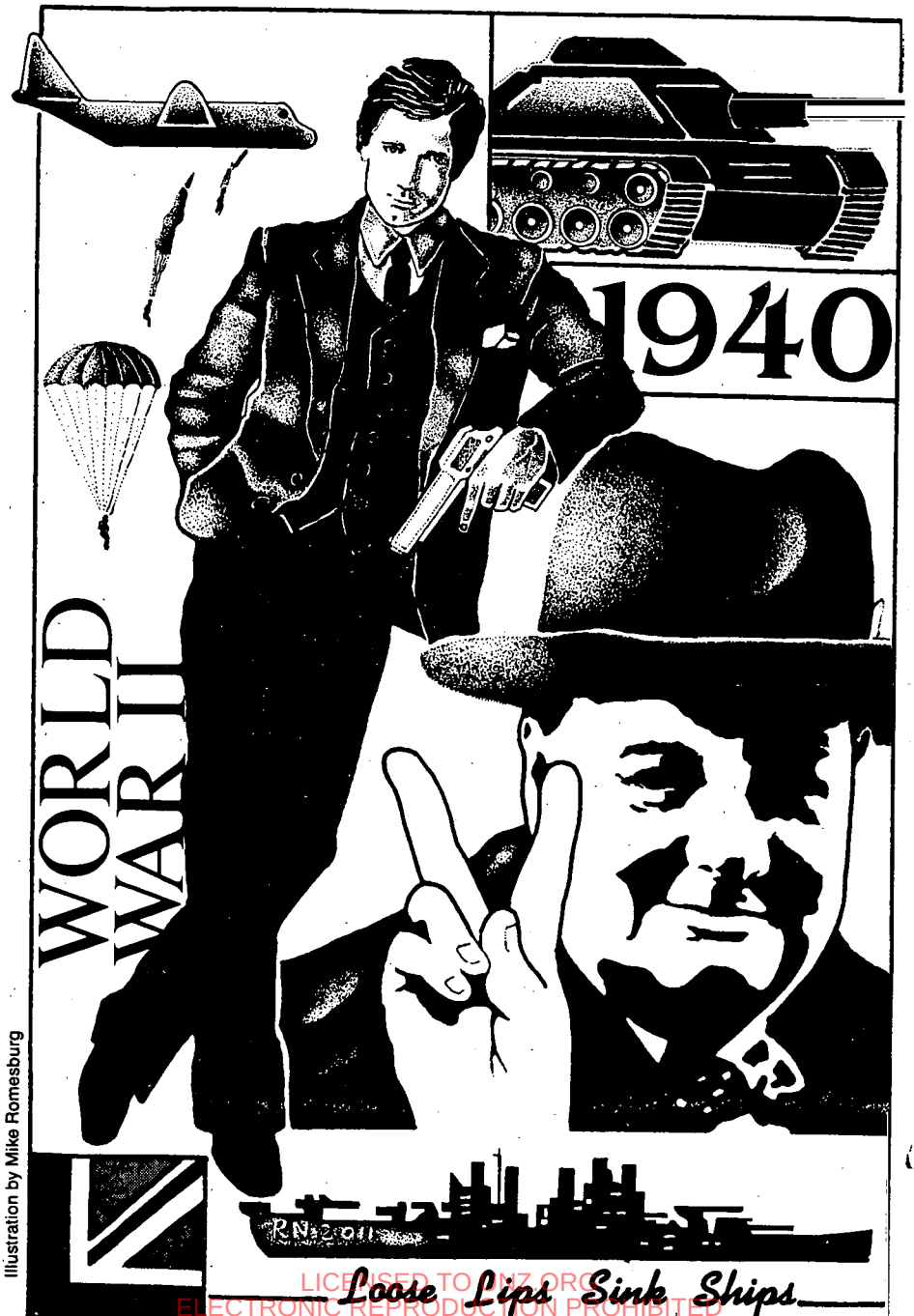

Illustration by Mike Romesburg

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A Memory Of WARTIME LONDON

by John Camp

When I volunteered for the British Army early in 1940, I was motivated by the same reasons that probably inspired most of my contemporaries: to defend my country at home, to attack the enemy overseas, to endure shot and shell (though I hoped devoutly that this contingency would never arise), and to end the war unscathed but with a crop of anecdotes that would bore my children and grandchildren stiff for many pleasurable years to come. What I certainly did not envisage was what actually happened—that for the next four years I should be required by the British War Office to spend much of my time drinking in sleazy clubs and bars in London's West End and be paid by a kindly government for the liquor I consumed!

It all began with an advertisement in the *Daily Telegraph,* which invited young men due for call-up, and fluent in one European language apart from English, to apply for entry into a new section of Intelligence then being formed. Being bi-lingual French/

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English (my mother was French and I had been brought up in France), I decided to apply. The result was a summons to a town some fifty miles from London where I and about thirty other hopefuls presented ourselves for interview, to be conducted by a large and much-decorated officer in the Brigade of Guards.

The officer told us we were being selected for a new section of Intelligence, called *Field Security,* and if chosen it would be our duty to mix with all types of people, including prostitutes, and perhaps to visit brothels. Picking himself up off the floor after the rush of eager applicants, he continued with the business in hand, which was to test us in our chosen language. In the event, six of us out of the thirty were selected after having taken down dictation—in execrable French—which dealt with muzzle velocities and ballistics and was virtually incomprehensible to a civilian in English, let alone any other language.

Having passed the first hurdle, and done a three-months crash course in infantry training (we were supposed to be in the Army, after all), we were sent off to Matlock, in Derbyshire, for the actual training in Intelligence matters. Here the course took place in a large and derelict hotel, called *Smedley's Hydro,* and included such diverse subjects as deciphering codes and ciphers, keeping observation on suspects and following them in such a way that they would not immediately complain to the police, and the much-neglected but vital art of writing in invisible ink. One member of the course, now an elder statesman of British politics and a Lord into the bargain, disgraced himself at Smedley's by riding his motorcycle down one of the hotel corridors and knocking over a visiting general. As a result, it was suggested to him that he apply for a transfer to another section of the services. Despite this "suggestion," however, he stayed with us to the end and completed the course. The reason for his *non-transference,* he told me later, was that he had used his newly-acquired expertise and written his application in invisible ink.

Our training completed, we were ready to begin our duties as members of Field Security, and were assigned to various parts of Britain.

Before the war, I had been a salesman in the West End of London and knew it intimately. In one of the few instances of the War Office getting this sort of thing right, this was the very area to which I was assigned. Because I knew London so well, I had fully expected to be posted to the Outer Hebrides off the coast of Scotland, a fate that befell a friend of mine who was also a salesman in London. But all was well. Within a week or two, we had been formed into a Field Security section of twelve men, our headquarters a large mansion in Kensington formerly

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"She told me of a customer she had had earlier in the day, who claimed he was a French officer—head of a secret sabotage organisation."

owned by the American millionaire and philanthropist, W. Chester Beatty.

In the West End, during those war years, there was an ever-shifting population of servicemen of many nationalities, mostly on leave and catered to by the dozens of pubs and clubs in Mayfair and Soho. Included in this multi-national population were many civilians, both British and foreign, whose one desire was to see Britain go under and Germany win the war. They had two main methods of attempting to help accomplish this: one was to befriend servicemen on leave, in clubs and pubs, and try and find out where they had come from and where they were going to be posted, and pass this information along to enemy agents; the other was to try and reduce their enthusiasm for the war by indulging in defeatist talk; the object of *this* method being to cause the soldier or sailor to desert. Our job was to watch out and report on examples of any such behaviour on the part of civilians and to ensure that serving personnel did not talk unwisely to strangers.

From our HQ, we set off each evening—for much of the action was at night—to our various assignments. Usually these were the result of an incident being reported from a pub or club in the area, but sometimes we just visited a location we thought might turn up something. With such a large and ever-shifting population, we could never have done this job on our own, but were greatly helped by Special Branch at Scotland Yard, whose main interest was foreigners, and by the detectives of the police districts in which we operated. But the main difficulty of the work was one that had never been properly explained to us: It was the problem of being out half the night drinking and then writing a clear and coherent report the following morning, despite the liquor consumed the night before. Never in my wildest dreams had I imagined that one day the Army would be paying me to knock back beer!

As happens in every law-enforcement system, we made much use of informants. Many of these were barmen, who would get in touch with us the moment they noticed suspicious behaviour on the part of a civilian, or even a soldier. One such contact was the owner of a very successful West

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End club. He was an American from California, and his club was called, inevitably, "Frisco's." It was very expensive and therefore used mainly by high-ranking officers of the various services and important government officials. It made a most attractive target for an enemy agent wanting to pick up confidential or secret information.

One evening, Frisco called me and reported he was concerned about the behaviour of a Swedish civilian, who seemed very interested in naval matters and particularly in transatlantic convoys. It did not take me long to contact my opposite number in Naval Security, and the next evening I took him to the club and introduced him as a new member. Frisco played along and organised it so that my friend was soon talking to the Swede. Sure enough, the man began questioning him about his service in the Navy and soon steered the conversation round to transatlantic convoys. The navy man answered his questions willingly, but not too willingly, filling up the Swede with a load of nonsense about convoy work and, for good measure, inventing some special "anti-U boat" measures that he said were due to be adopted. The Swede swallowed the bait and could scarcely get back to his flat quickly enough to deal with this scoop. Needless to say, he was followed, and having given him an hour or so to get himself organised, we entered the flat with a search-warrant and found his transmitter ready for use and the material just about to be sent to his chief in Stockholm. He was arrested immediately, but we had no idea how much information might already have been sent to Sweden and on to Germany by this means. After a spell in prison, he was sent back to Sweden. Frisco, himself, sympathetic as he was to the British cause, never really forgave me for depriving him of such a good client.

Of the many informants working for us unofficially in the West End, some of the most reliable and useful were the "girls" who solicited in that part of Mayfair called Shepherd Market and in nearby Curzon Street. Most of them had apartments close by, to which they would take their clients after picking them up in one of the five pubs in the area. These girls were ideally placed to spot a suspect. Each of us had two girls working for him, and fiercely patriotic they were, too. They considered it their "war-work" and at first were so keen that they reported to us practically every customer they had with a foreign accent. Gradually we managed to control their enthusiasm and teach them the signs we were looking for; eventually, they became a highly important, if completely unofficial, part of the Intelligence service.

One evening, I was working undercover in a pub in Shepherd Market called "The Grapes." Julie, one of my girls, was also there, and

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passed me a message that she had something important to tell me. Fortunately for Julie, but unfortunately for me, trade was particularly brisk that night and Julie kept vanishing for twenty minutes at a time as she hooked a new customer. It was not until the pub was closing that we were able to make contact, upon which Julie, glad of a break, invited me up to her apartment for a coffee. There she told me of a customer she had had earlier in the day, who claimed he was a French officer—head of a secret sabotage organisation—who was due to be dropped by parachute into France the next day. He also obliged Julie by telling her of the exact time and place. This, of course, was very important information, and after taking copious notes, including a full description of the man, I prepared to leave. Julie, however, would not hear of it, and insisted I stay the night ("I never charge my friends, dear!"). It took all the tact at my disposal to decline the invitation without hurting the girl and I told her (quite truthfully) that I had to get back and write up a report on the matter for my commanding officer. At this, Julie, looking at my civilian clothes, burst out: "You poor dear! I quite forgot you are in the Army—you must be starved to death!" Diving into her larder, she emerged with a massive steak, half-a-dozen eggs, and two pork cutlets, which she insisted on giving me. Clutching these goodies to my bosom, I emerged into the street at two o'clock in the morning and hailed a cab. The driver, who knew the addresses of most of the girls, looked at me in amazement and must have wondered what on earth I could have been doing in Julie's apartment for her to have to pay me in kind!

I made my report in the early hours and later that day the French officer was traced (Julie had managed to get a look inside his pocket-book) and arrested. In the event, he denied all knowledge of any secret sabotage organisation, or of being dropped in France that day or any other day. Like many a man before him, he had told a girl a pack of lies merely to impress her. I did not tell Julie that. I had no wish to dampen her enthusiasm, for the next time such an incident took place it could be true.

But "making an impression" could work both ways, I discovered very early on. A great deal of time was wasted by girls and young ladies who invented suspicious-looking characters and reported them to the police, who passed the information on to us. These suspects were invented with the object of making the Intelligence Services think that here was a girl who had her wits about her and might make a good counter-intelligence agent.

Over a period of about three weeks, I was called almost every day by a famous actress, who was currently appearing in a West End play. She told me of a suspect Canadian she had met, who said

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he was willing to pay her good money for any information she could obtain from Army officers. Night after night, after the show was over, I escorted the lady to various clubs and dives where, she said, the Canadian was likely to be present. We never caught up with him and eventually it became obvious that the actress was stringing me along, getting free drinks and entertainment every night at government expense. I decided to do something about it.

One evening, I went to the theatre at which she was appearing about half an hour before the performance was due to start. I insisted on being taken to her dressing-room and there informed her of what I thought was going on. Tearfully, and with much theatricality, she insisted her suspicions were true and that there really *was* a sinister Canadian. I refused to believe her and said I was staying in her dressing-room until she came clean. The performance she gave on hearing that would have got her an Oscar ten times over, but I stuck to my guns and refused to leave. Finally, with much sobbing and accusations of cruelty, she admitted I was right and that there never had been a suspect Canadian. By this time, she was almost due to go on, but was in such a state that the performance had to be put back for twenty minutes. Never before, or since, have I "stopped the show!"

Having to make friends with pimps and prostitutes can sometimes be an entertaining experience, but it can have unexpected drawbacks, too. One of my operatives was a man called Bill Evans, who came from a remote village in West Wales and was married to a very young and rather prim school-mistress. She had been to London once only, and that when she was a child; finding that Bill was stationed there, she insisted on coming to London to see him for the weekend. She duly arrived and Bill dutifully took her around and showed her the standard sights. Unwisely, however, his conducted tour of the West End also included Shepherd Market and Curzon Street. Turning a corner, the couple suddenly came face-to-face with Helen, one of Bill's "professional" informants. Without thinking, he greeted her cordially, and she replied, "Hello, Bill, how are things?" Bill's wife, who was evidently not quite as innocent as was supposed, quickly spotted what Helen really was and gave Bill hell! It took him a very long time to explain to her how he and a prostitute could be on first-name terms, without either breaching the Official Secrets Act or ruining his marriage.

As well as winkling-out suspects, our duties also involved ensuring that security in important military establishments was as good as it could be. The military headquarters of London District was in Curzon Street at the time, and on one occasion I was involved in an exercise to test the

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"Oh for heaven's sake, Bob, I'm not saying you don't look good in a dress! I'm just saying you don't look good in that dress!"

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security of the building. I had to get inside with a false pass, find a certain office and take some important documents, and make my escape. I cased the building for several days and watched the system of checking passes. It soon became apparent that to get inside with a false pass was a virtual impossibility and another method would have to be devised. Luck was with me, for in my tour of inspection I noticed that part of a basement wall had been demolished and was being bricked-up again by workmen.

Dressed as a rather scruffy-looking private, I went to the men and told them a story of how I had lost my pass and would certainly be in dire trouble if the fact became known. Bringing my salesmanship into play, I finally persuaded the men to let me into the building through the gap in the wall, and ten minutes later, the wall was complete again with no sign of anyone having entered that way. Once in the building, I made my way to the office I wanted. Fortunately, no-one was in there; scooping up some papers, I prepared to escape. My plan was to walk out of the building quite casually, but unfortunately somebody's suspicions had been aroused and the cry went up that a spy was on the premises. All exits were firmly closed and everyone's pass closely examined. I went to earth, as it were, in the mens' lavatory, carefully jumping onto the seat so my legs would not be showing if they looked under the door. They looked under the door—and because the door would not open were immediately suspicious.

In the event, I was arrested and taken down to the military police cells in the base of the building, only a few yards from where I had got in. My instructions were to tell nobody that this was an exercise, and if I were caught to give my captors the name and telephone number of a high-ranking officer at the War Office. This I did, only to be told that the officer concerned was away for the weekend and nobody else knew anything about it. As the MPs thought I was a spy (or at least being used to catch them out), their attitude to me was far from pleasant, and I passed the most uncomfortable weekend at their hands that I have ever experienced. Finally, Monday morning came, and with it the order for my release. Curiously enough, the sergeant in charge of the Military Police was so fascinated by the affair that he applied to join Field Security himself. I met him later in Normandy, but never explained to him how I had managed to get into the headquarters of London District without a valid pass.

There were other problems that cropped up in the course of the work. One that created a great deal of activity and undercover work was the method used by a well-known religious and ultra-pacifist sect to get soldiers to desert. In

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each part of London, girl members of the sect were allocated to find out when soldiers (or any servicemen) were coming home on leave. The girls, always very attractive, would "happen" to bump into the soldier at the station and offer to help him with his kitbag or other luggage. In many cases, a date followed; the unsuspecting victim would be asked round to the girl's home for the evening, and little by little the anti-war propaganda would begin. It was our task to infiltrate this religious sect, who, in any case, were having very little success. Field Security personnel joined the various groups for religious readings and debates, but in at least one case suspicions were aroused when the operative began looking for the *Book of Genesis* at the back-end of the Bible. At a meeting I attended a few weeks later, at which most of the London groups of the sect were represented, the pastor remarked somewhat wryly on the enormous increase in membership seen during the past months, due mainly to an influx of young men of military age! Soon after that, we received instructions to take no further action.

Though we were helped very much by the ordinary detectives of the various police precincts, we occasionally experienced difficulties caused by the zeal of the police high-ups. In the area of the West End round Regent Street, there were the maximum number of *dayclubs,* most of which continued to operate at night long after the official closing time. One keen superintendent of the local precinct decided to have a full-scale swoop on these clubs and close most of them down. Our own high-ups in Intelligence fought the police hard over that one, for many of our suspects were known to haunt certain regular clubs, and we knew where to find them. If most of the clubs were closed overnight, we would have to start looking for them all over again. In the event, the Police Superintendent was persuaded that it might be best not to take drinking after hours too seriously. As my territory was the one with the most clubs in it, I was known to be in favour of leaving them alone, but as a result remained in the black books of this police chief ever after.

Counter-intelligence work can be very entertaining at times, but there are long stretches of boredom in between. Even during cases, the lack of activity can be wearisome, as on the occasion when I had to keep observation on a suspect outside his house. He stayed indoors for three days, during which it poured with rain almost continuously and I had to spend most of the time watching the house from a telephone booth.

Still, despite popular belief, the work is not all that dangerous. The danger comes only if, like poor Bill Evans from West Wales, you let it tangle with your private life! ■

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DEADLY SCORE

by John F. Dobbyn

The phone jangled Professor Hart's concentration; it took him three stabs with the key before he found the keyhole. The door finally sprang open on the fourth ring. He slalomed his rotund body around the furniture, caroming off the odd shelf and corner like a life-size pinball, and caught the phone on the sixth ring with a breathless "Hello."

"Henry, old comrade! Do you know who's talking to you from the city of New York?"

Good Lord, he thought, rubbing his bruised thighs, *guessing games.* Suddenly he forgot the pain. "Misha! Is that you? I can't believe it. It's been, what—ten years?"

"At the very least, my friend. I'm sorry to call so late at night. Am I waking you up?"

"Not a bit of it. I was just coming in. As a matter of fact, you'll be interested to hear I

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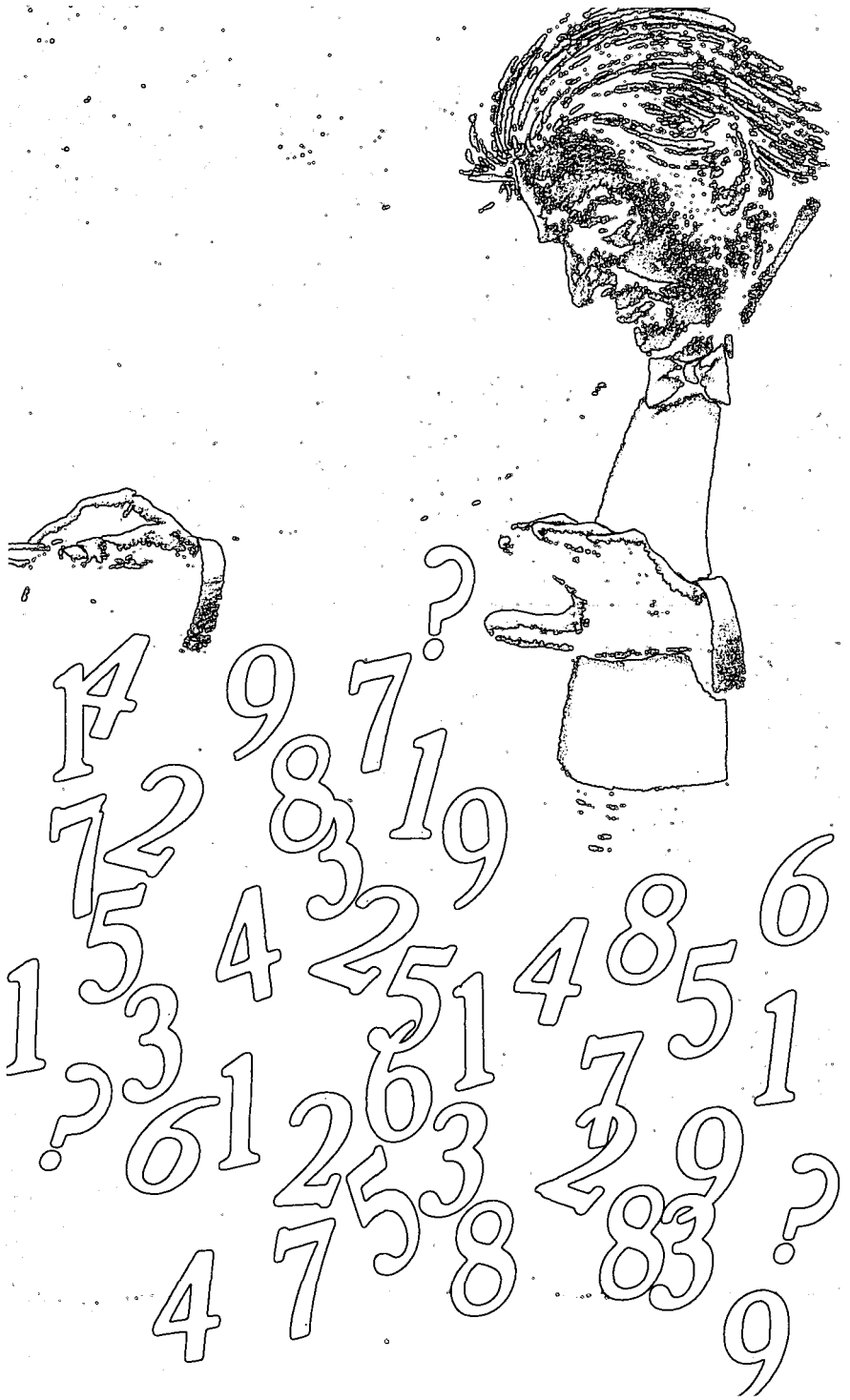

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was at a meeting of the music committee. We were working on final arrangements for your concert here tomorrow night. Don't tell me you're calling to cancel?"

"Hah! I'd sooner cancel a year of my life. Will you be there, Henry?"

"Is there anything in the world that could make me miss it? I assume the orchestra is up to your standards."

"I think we can do justice to your friend, Beethoven. Henry, I have just a few minutes. We're doing a concert at Carnegie Hall in an hour. I just had to tell you that I'm looking forward to re-living old times with you. Do you remember the grand time we had in Bonn? How many years ago was that?"

The hesitation in Professor Hart's response was not to count years. His voice was calm: "More than I'd like to admit, Misha."

"Yes. And do you remember how beautiful the lady was that night, Henry?"

Again something arrested Professor Hart's response. He was sure that Misha caught it. Why was he doing this to him?

"She was inspiring. Could it be you're still in love with her, Misha?"

"Most exactly. I've never fallen out of love with her. Yes, well, perhaps we'll recapture those moments tomorrow night."

"Nothing could please me more, Misha."

"I'm sure you'll particularly enjoy the Beethoven. I'll be doing this one just for you, my friend."

The phone hung in his hand long after the tone indicated that Misha was gone. He was lost in another world of European concert halls, receptions, and politics, in a trance broken only by the buzzer at the door.

"Come in. It's open."

"Professor Hart? Hello. Did you get my note? My name's Allen Stewart."

"Yes. Come in. Have a seat. You said you'd drop by. I lost track of the time. Can I get you a drink? Coffee?"

"No, but. . .do you suppose we could turn on the lights?"

"Ah, I'm terribly sorry. I was a bit lost when you rang. I forgot they weren't on. I seldom use them."

"Now it's my turn to be sorry. Nobody mentioned. . ."

"That I'm blind? Don't be sorry. It's. . .Don't you be embarrassed and I won't be either. Come sit over here. I didn't quite understand what you wanted to see me about."

"I'm with the State Department, Professor. I understand that Misha Mikovitch is an old acquaintance of yours."

"Yes. More than that."

"You know that he's in this

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country on a cultural exchange . . . he's the touring conductor with the Leningrad Symphony Orchestra. He's been doing this for about ten years now, but always in other parts of the country."

"I know. I've missed him each time. The orchestra's playing here at the university tomorrow night."

"Yes."

"So how does that involve the State Department?"

"After ten years, the Soviets seem to consider him a good risk, probably because he's never given any indication of any inclination to defect. Last week he got in touch with us through a contact—his. The word was that he's wrestling with a decision. He plans to make that decision by tomorrow night's concert. He's asked us to have authorities waiting in the wings of the concert hall to take him into protective custody if he decides to come over. Needless to say, it could be risky for him and embarrassing for us if we make a move to take him and he's decided against it. The timing has to be his."

"How will you know?"

"That's the problem. His contact said he'd arrange a signal and get back to us this morning. We haven't heard a word. That's what has me worried. They could be on to him."

Professor Hart filled a pipe as he listened. "So what brings you to me?"

"You must realize what he's planning to do. You have to talk him out of it. It's terribly dangerous."

"His contact mentioned your name. He said you might be willing to help as a go-between."

The professor guided the warmth of a match-flame to the bowl of his pipe. "I may be able to give you more help than that. I think he's already set up a signal. I was just talking to him on the phone. I'm sure he knew he was being watched."

"I don't doubt it. His contact told us that someone in the orchestra is assigned to keep an eye on him. He has no idea who. What sort of signal did he mention?"

"Beethoven."

"I beg your pardon?"

"Beethoven. It makes sense now. He made an odd allusion to the 'grand time' we had many years ago in Bonn."

"Why is that an odd allusion?"

"It was a disastrous time. It left us both shaken for months. Similar situation to this. There was a young lady from East Germany, a marvelous virtuoso. She was planning to defect but

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couldn't tell until the last moment if the time was right. Her signal was to be the choice of the Beethoven piano concerto she'd play as her last selection. If it was an odd numbered concerto, the plan was on. If she played an even numbered concerto, it was off. The plan went badly. Word got out. She was . . ."

"I take it she meant a great deal to you, Professor."

"To us both. In any event, when I just spoke to Misha he talked about re-living those grand old times. He said he'd be playing the Beethoven symphony especially for me. I think he was telling me that he'd be using the same signal. If the last selection is an even numbered symphony, it's off. If it's an odd numbered symphony, the game is on."

"I hear what you're saying, Professor. That's not terribly conclusive, is it?"

"There's one other thing, Mr. Stewart. You may not understand this. He asked if I remembered how beautiful the lady was. . . I'm sure he wasn't referring to the lady who was planning the escape. Misha couldn't be that insensitive. I . . . was in love with that lady. The only thing I *didn't* know about her was how beautiful she was."

"I'm really sorry, Professor."

"No, please. That was a long time ago. There was another lady that we talked about frequently, in terms of her beauty, when we were alone."

"Who was she?"

"The lady of the harbor. Miss Liberty. I'm sure that's the lady he meant when he said he was still in love with her."

"Would you sit with me tomorrow night, Professor? I'll need your knowledge of Beethoven, and your intuition."

"I wouldn't be anywhere else."

The following morning, Professor Hart was engrossed in gathering his materials for class when the door-buzzer again brought him out of his thoughts. He opened the door, this time to the sound of a female voice speaking in a heavy Russian accent.

"Professor," she said, after she'd entered his living room, "I'm presuming on your friendship for Misha Mikovitch. He needs your help. I know he talked to you last night; you must realize what he's planning to do. You have to talk him out of it. It's terribly dangerous. They'll never let him do it."

"Who is 'they,' Miss . . ."

"My name is Anna Vorsky. 'They' are *they*. You must know what I'm talking about."

"I suppose I do. Why would Misha listen to me about something like this? I haven't seen him in over ten years."

"He has enormous affection for you."

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"And for you? Do I detect a tone of affection for Misha in your voice?"

"More than that."

"Mmm. Love?"

"Perhaps more than that. Will you please try?"

Professor Hart weighed his thoughts before answering. "No, I don't think so."

Her voice cracked slightly. "Why not?"

"I take it we both love him, but that's a decision only Misha can make. It's a commitment to re-direct his whole life. I don't know what brought him to this point after ten years, I've been out of touch with him too long. As a matter of fact, I'm not even sure he's really considering it."

The professor felt a wall go up between them as she sensed that he was not taking her into his confidence. She excused herself and walked to the door.

"Of course it's Misha's decision, but if anything happens to him . . . I can see I came to the wrong person. You'll have to excuse me. I thought you had the same feeling for Misha that he has for you."

He heard her footsteps recede to the door, and with every one he ached to call her back. *But to what purpose,* he thought. *What more could I say if I did?*

University Hall was resplendent in tuxedoes and formal gowns. The ripple of greetings and conversation that flowed down the crowded aisles and into the rapidly filling room was a counter-point to the random tuning of instruments by the musicians on the stage. Professor Hart worked his way down the aisle and took his seat in the third row beside Allen Stewart.

"Have you heard anything since last night, Mr. Stewart?"

"Not a word. We haven't tried to make contact, for obvious reasons. Did Mikovitch get back to you."

"No, but I'm not surprised. It was a strained conversation for Misha last night. I wonder if he thinks they're on to him."

"We'll know when he gets to the last selection. I see the program has it listed simply as "A Symphony by Beethoven."

"Did you arrange a reception committee for him in case he goes through with it?"

"We have FBI agents waiting in the wings."

The tension heightened Professor Hart's awareness of a hush spreading through the audience, followed by a swelling ovation. He could hear the rustle of gowns as row after row rose to its feet.

"Is that for Misha?"

"Yes. He just came on stage. He's bowing and smiling. He seems to love it. I wonder if he feels that they're welcoming him to a new life."

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Professor Hart's pulse raced. He would have paid any price to be able to search the eyes of his old friend for a clue. The crowd settled back, and he heard the baton tapping on the stand to signal the orchestra. In an instant, the hall was filled with the full, fiery pulsations of Tchaikovsky.

The response of the audience at the conclusion of the Tchaikovsky was thunderous and emotional. Professor Hart could visualize the huge, bear-like form of Misha Mikovitch reaching out with his massive arms to sweep in the applause and affection. It was a vision he could summon from his early twenties, before the disease that took his sight, when he and Misha met as competitors in the Beethoven Piano Competition in Vienna.

In his second selection, the conductor bathed the audience in the gently undulating waves of the Second Symphony of Rachmaninoff. Professor Hart read it as the calm before the storm. The audience again responded with unrestrained affection. It took five returns to center-stage before the swells of applause would allow Misha to withdraw for intermission. Professor Hart and Allen Stewart were among the few to remain in their seats.

"This is about it, Professor. According to the program this'll be the final selection. What's your guess?"

"I'll tell you this. If it's a go, I'd bet my life he'll choose the Fifth Symphony. I have no doubt whatever."

"Why so?"

"It'll be Misha's way of talking to me in the language of Beethoven. He wrote the symphony as a symbol of the freedom of the human spirit. You know those famous first four notes—da da da dum. Beethoven himself described that opening as 'fate knocking at the door.' There's so much symbolism there, Misha could never resist it."

The sounds of people slipping into the aisles raised the tension around him to a point at which Professor Hart could scarcely stay seated. Perspiration beaded his forehead beneath his greying hair. It seemed an eternity before the tide of applause again subsided, and the clicking of baton on metal stilled orchestra and audience.

Professor Hart knew Misha's timing. He was ready to hum the opening notes of the Fifth Symphony when the orchestra struck the first chord. Instead, it nearly knocked the wind out of his chest. He grabbed Allen Stewart's arm and whispered loud enough to be heard over the music.

"Something's wrong!"

"Why? What symphony is it?"

"It's the First!"

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"But that's an odd number. That means he's going through with it."

"I know, but something's wrong. That first chord was the key to the whole thing. The First Symphony opens with a chord that's so dissonant that it grates on the ear. Misha's telling me that he's going through with it, but there's something seriously off. I think he's saying he's in danger. Could they try to kill him for defecting?"

"You can bet your life on it. There was no need to mention it before but he's been an agent in the KGB for the past ten years. That's why they let him out of the country so much. He was the contact man for their agents wherever he'd give a concert. They could pass documents and information easily in the lines of people getting his autograph after a performance. *That's* the big deal. If he comes over to us, he has the names of most of their agents around the world. They can't afford to let him make the break and live."

"So what'll they do? They can't afford to kill him in front of all these people."

"They can't afford not to. It's just a question of who's going to do it. It could be someone in the orchestra, but who? There must be fifty musicians on stage."

Professor Hart riveted his mind on the music for a clue. Nothing came to him. Suddenly, he pulled Allen Stewart close to his ear. "Describe every position in the orchestra. Start with the first violin."

Allen Stewart rapidly began naming each instrument and position, while Professor Hart searched his memory.

". . .then an oboe, then two flutes, then a piccolo, then the section of french horns behind. . . "

"Wait a minute. That's it. It's the piccolo. He's the one. You've got to neutralize him."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure. Please do it quickly. It's almost over."

Allen Stewart reached for the transceiver on his belt and made contact with the agent stationed behind the curtain. He gave explicit orders. Within seconds, agents with white programs hiding the weapons in their hands appeared in the wings on both sides of the stage as the violins began the furiously paced ascendencies that lead to the finale of chopped chords.

The final stroke of the baton brought thunder-peals of applause. Only Professor Hart remained in his seat, straining to hear what he could not see. Noise from the audience was deafening but above it he heard two rapid explosions. The gasp of the audience seemed to catch in its throat, and for an

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instant there was silence. The professor could hear a rush of feet to center-stage, followed by the same sound rushing off into the wing on the left.

"He's alright, Professor. They got him off."

"Was he shot?"

"No. You were right, it was the piccolo player. There was a weapon. Our agents had to shoot."

"Did they kill him?"

"It wasn't a him, Professor."

"Of course. I can see it now. I should have known. It was Anna Vorsky, the woman who came to see me this morning. She had to be their agent."

"Why?"

"I knew that Misha was afraid to see me. Even his phone call was strained and guarded. She would have been just as frightened to come to my home unless she were the one assigned to watch him. Misha told her about his plan to defect. She wanted me to talk him out of it."

"That makes sense. If she could get you to convince him even to postpone it, she'd have time to take care of him more quietly. As it was, I suppose she had to make the most of a last minute attempt in the hope that no one would know where the shot came from. In fact, we probably wouldn't have known if you hadn't focused our attention on her. How did you know it was the piccolo player?"

"When I was a musician, I must have played and conducted that symphony two dozen times. It was just lucky that I could remember the score. There is no piccolo in Beethoven's First Symphony. That was the only instrument that didn't belong on stage." ■

Did you know...

A 15 year-old Melbourne schoolboy, writing an essay on Russian defectors, wrote to his country's security services and received by post a "Top Secret" file on the defection of Vladimir Petrov.

Delighted, he copied out the details of the diplomat's defection at the Russian Embassy in Canberra, and went on to describe how Petrov's wife Eva was kidnapped by two Russian agents but snatched back by Australian Police.

Meanwhile, someone in Intelligence realised their error and two large men with bulging armpits arrived at the boy's school, Parkdale High, to grill him and snatch back the file.

It was returned to him, though, later, . . with large sections censored; they pruned his essay drastically, too.

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THE EXPERTS AGREE THAT CENSORSHIP WORKS

The experts have always agreed that censorship is the single best way to promote agreement on an idea. Even on a bad idea. Censorship worked in Nazi Germany, and censorship works today in Iran, Cuba and the Soviet Union.

Today, a few so-called "decency" groups are trying to make censorship work in America. These people feel that if you aren't allowed to watch "dangerous" television programs like "Mash" and "The Day After," or read "immoral" magazines like *Ms.* and *Penthouse* or books like *Ulysses* and *Huckleberry Finn*, our nation will be a better place.

Fortunately, in America you don't have to trust your freedom to "experts." You have the freedom to say No to censorship. Say it today–tomorrow may be too late.

Freedom is everybody's business.

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INTERVIEW: Robert Littell

by Stanley Wiater

This past winter saw the welcome arrival of Robert Littell's latest novel, *The Sisters.* Recommended by the editors of the *New York Times Book Review* and selected by the Literary Guild, the novel begins as a gripping cat-and-mouse game between various East-West factions, a game which ultimately intertwines with one of the most devastating political assassinations ever known. Susan Issacs has said of its author that "What Elmore Leonard is to mysteries, what Isaac Asimov is to science fiction, and what Stephen King is to horror—well, that's what Robert Littell is to the novel of intrigue." And best-selling author Thomas Clancy has said of his colleague, "If he didn't invent the American spy novel, he should have."

Littell, who was born and reared in New York, has for the past several years lived and worked overseas. A former journalist for *Newsweek* specializing in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, he left the magazine to publish his first novel, *The Defection of A.J. Lewinter,* in 1970. Currently, Littell makes his home in Martel, France. He lives in a reconverted farmhouse "part of which was here in the year 1219. . .with walls that are more than a yard thick." There he works every day in his office, one wall of which is ceiling to floor bookshelves—with most of the volumes dealing with the Soviet Union. The office (which has a fireplace) is kept simple, with a desk, chair, and the usual writing materials.

"And a manual typewriter—I'm one of the few people who doesn't even use an electric typewriter, not to mention one of those word processors. Everyone's trying to get me to go over to them, but I don't think," he laughingly informs us, "that words should be processed. Besides, we have a lot of

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electrical blackouts here—there was one last night, as a matter of fact—and if I had an electric typewriter there would be hours or even days when I couldn't work. But with my manual, I can just light a candle and go to work."

With all his novels back in print, it's safe to say that by the time *The Sisters* is reissued in paperback, Robert Littell will have become the "brand-name" espionage writer he most certainly is destined to be.

ESPIONAGE: Your novels are noted for their attention to detail, and how accurately they reflect contemporary life in Eastern Europe and Russia. How do you go about, however, researching the business of espionage?

LITTELL: There are two things to be said in this area. One is that there's an enormous amount of literature—and I have a lot of it on my shelves here—on espionage, and the details that you need to establish your "expertise" are readily available in these books. Or even in your daily newspaper; it's been a hell of a year for spies being brought to the attention of the papers! But, like most people who write novels, I make nine-tenths of it up.

The other is that, for me, the great attraction to writing about espionage is that it's really like an iceberg. There's a little bit poking up above the surface—which is the story you see in the newspaper—and then there's that great mass under the surface that nobody sees, that the government won't talk about, and which only a person who writes novels can attack with his imagination. And I think what I basically do is tell the reader what's going on *underneath.*

ESPIONAGE: Has any specific real-life event ever triggered a novel, or an incident in one of your novels?

LITTELL: Just one incident, which is in *The Amateur.* Someone once told me a story that, after World War II, the Russian soldiers in East Germany and all of Eastern Europe didn't have toilet paper. So when they went to the bathroom, they used old letters. And the French, with their local spies, were collecting these letters, shipping them to Paris, cleaning them, and reading them! [chuckles] And a lot of these letters were from other soldiers and other military people, thus forming a profile of the Soviet forces—of their morale, of their readiness for combat, the economic situation back in Russia. And they were doing this for years and years. But that's the only "real" piece of information that I can

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remember knowingly putting in one of my books.

ESPIONAGE: This might seem like an off-the-wall question, but why are all the great spy novelists—Fleming, Le Carré, Deighton—foreigners? Even you, a native New Yorker, make your home now in France. Is there something about being European—or just being in Europe—that makes one a better writer in this field?

LITTELL: That's a pretty obvious question—but I never thought about it. . . ! [chuckles] I don't know! But living in France, from my point of view, is that geographically I'm sitting between the East and the West. The body politic in France is also trying to do a balancing act between East and West in maintaining their independence. So I look one way and I "see" Russia, and I look another and I "see" America. I follow the political and economical events in both countries closely, so I have the feeling that I'm sitting between the two and I have a good view of both. Maybe that's it.

ESPIONAGE: Do you ever compare notes, as it were, with other writers in your field?

LITTELL: I don't know any espionage writers. I don't know *any* writers! [laughs] My friends are all farmers, and people like that. I keep up to date with all my old friends from *Newsweek,* but nobody's giving me "tips," if that's what you mean! Nobody gives me anything! The only spy writer who I've ever read was John le Carré, who is absolutely a master at what he does. I simply don't read too many novels to begin with, and the reason I read so few novels is partly because I don't have the time to read them—it's a real luxury to give yourself that time. I spend a great deal of my reading time reading histories and biographies, and books on current events. Those are my bread and butter, and besides, I'm very interested in politics and current affairs.

ESPIONAGE: Then how long does it take for you to go from your initial research to actually writing and completing a novel?

LITTELL: All the novels fall into a similar pattern: it takes about a year from thinking about it, and saving material specifically for that novel, and about a year of writing.

ESPIONAGE: The old adage is that you should write about what you know. We take it you've been to Russia a few times.

LITTELL: Yes, I've been many, many times. I've been all over East Europe. I've been to the Soviet Union, and all the

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Communist countries in East Europe except Albania. I've done a *great* deal of traveling in Communist countries and throughout Europe. This was before, during, and after working for *Newsweek*. And while you're there you're meeting people, soaking up atmosphere. But mostly meeting and talking with Russians, sometimes late into the night and the early hours of the morning, getting a feel for their language, and their problems, and their worldview.

ESPIONAGE: In your visits to the Soviet Union, did you have any personal adventures that may have inspired something in your work later on?

LITTELL: Once, when I was there for *Newsweek,* I had made contact with some dissident writers. And as soon as I made contact with these writers, then I noticed I was being followed. On the spur of the moment, once, I decided to race through the tunnel system under Red Square after leaving my hotel. I raced down the steps, raced through the tunnel, raced up the steps—and then stopped and waited. And sure enough, a guy came flying out after me! I noticed then that, for the rest of the morning, wherever I went, the same man was around me, either ahead of me or behind me. He was always there. He wore green socks. And so in one of my books I refer to a Russian as "Green Socks." [laughs] That was my only adventure.

ESPIONAGE: You made the point in *The Sisters* that a spy becomes paranoid after being followed by another spy.

LITTELL: The psychology of it was very interesting, because once you're followed, after that you think everybody who is behind you is following you. *Everybody.* And you invent people following you even if nobody is!

ESPIONAGE: Just to get back to *The Amateur* for a moment, what did you think of the film version, and is that one of your favorite novels to begin with?

LITTELL: My own favorites are *Mother Russia* and *The October Circle,* which I think of with . . . nostalgia. [laughs] As for *The Amateur,* I wrote the first screenplay for the film, and it was rewritten by the wife of the producer because I wouldn't come to Los Angeles and work on the rewrites there. I wanted to do it from my home in Europe, and we had some fights about that . . . eventually I saw the rewrites and told the producer how badly someone had screwed up the dialogue, only to find out later it had been his wife! But the film had a very slick look, with good actors, but it misses

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completely because, basically, it thinks the audience is very unintelligent. So I think the film's a failure.

ESPIONAGE: Any other film versions on the horizon?

LITTELL: Just about all my other novels have been optioned at one time or another, but nothing gets made. I would not at all mind seeing a very good film *interpretation* of another one of my books. There're some very intelligent and talented people out there in Hollywood. It would be fun.

ESPIONAGE: It was fascinating to note in *The Sisters* the marked lack of traditional "heroes." Nobody was truly an innocent; rather, every character was someone who had managed to survive by selling off his soul piece by piece, year after year.

LITTELL: Yes—that's right on. It's a big cliche, but it's true: the big combat today is the Individual against the State. I think the individual eventually has to lose, and the only question is, how much grace does he bring to the battle he fights? I see my characters as people who are fighting the State, the great machine of the East-West cold war, and being smothered by these great machines we call the Government or the State, and who fight the good fight. They give a bit of themselves away throughout their whole lives, and then they reach a point where they just can't give any more of themselves away, and still be themselves. They stop making those compromises that we all make every day of the year, and they draw a line. And they make an issue out of whatever happens to be at stake that day, and then they go on to the *denouement.*

ESPIONAGE: Yes, no matter what the final cost. It's exciting that your earlier novels are being brought back into print, however, don't espionage novels run a greater risk of becoming dated than, say, a western or a mystery? Politics are always changing so rapidly, it would seem.

LITTELL: Well, in *The Sisters,* for example, I never come out and say who the assassination target is directly. I never say it because I'm trying to keep the subject universal, if you see what I mean. I'm really talking about the game between the superpowers, and that "game" goes on and on and on. The chess players may be different, but the pieces in the game always remain the same.

ESPIONAGE: We're still curious to know why you chose to write spy novels for a living. Did you have a relative who

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worked for the CIA, or did someone leave a stack of Eric Ambler novels by your bed when you were a child?

LITTELL: I have no idea. When I was a teenager, I read a great deal; when I went to the university, I studied English literature; and after that I became a journalist and became very interested in politics and current events. When I went to write my first novel, I gravitated toward the world of espionage, but I can't tell you any more than that! [laughs] It's a mystery.

ESPIONAGE: Then how do you explain your particular affinity with the Russian people that comes through so vividly in your work?

LITTELL: Well, my parents were emigrants from Russia in the 1880s, and I have roots that go back to Russia in that period. When I went to Russia for the first time in 1964, I was looking for my roots, to see where my family had come from. So my interest in Russia and East Europe is just a natural affinity for that part of the world.

ESPIONAGE: Maybe that's a clue to explaining the "mystery." We'd like to know what keeps you at it, what still intrigues and excites you about writing in the espionage field. Presumably, you're already at work on your eighth novel.

LITTELL: Oh, absolutely! [laughs] Writing is a wonderful life, and it's very intriguing in itself. There's a wonderful adventure involved every time you sit down to write a sentence—you try to write one that is beautiful. You don't always succeed, far from it! But the sheer magic of writing, the magic of trying to convey subtle meanings, of suggesting things between words—that's part of the adventure of this business that we're all in.

ESPIONAGE: Could you tell us a little more about that new novel you're working on?

LITTELL: I don't particularly want to talk about my current project, mostly because I have the feeling that if you talk about it, it'll go away! But I am more than half-way through a new novel.

ESPIONAGE: A spy novel, we trust?

LITTELL: Well, I wouldn't want to answer *yes,* but I wouldn't want to answer *no*. . . ! [laughs] I don't mean to be coy, but when it's published it'll be a book; right now it's only a work-in-progress. We'll just have to see. ■

Illustration by Bruce Baker

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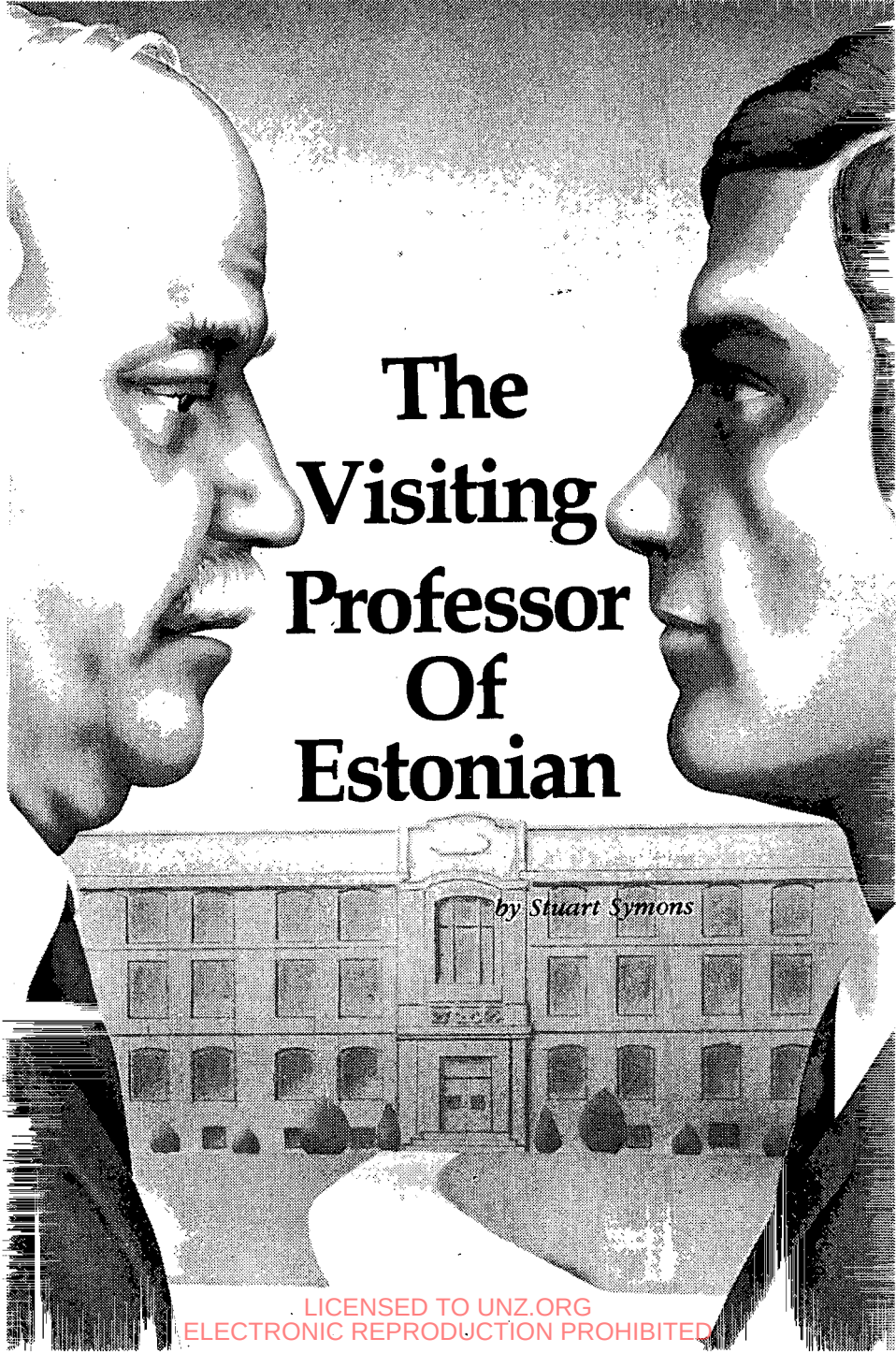

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The letter came in the morning post. It was postmarked Tallinn and was from the *Akadeemiline Emakeele Selts,* the Academic Society for the Study of Estonian, inviting me to give a series of lectures. It looked as if it had already been opened.

The telephone call came half an hour later. It was from a man named Quimby. "Professor Kaarlo Aalto?"

"Yes. . ."

"I should like very much to come round and chat with you a bit."

"If it's about my account with Maxwell's, I thought that matter had been settled."

"Oh, no, no, it's nothing like that," said Quimby, "just a friendly chat about Estonian, that's all."

I was somewhat puzzled, but I said, "I shall be free tomorrow morning."

"Actually, I was hoping it could be earlier than that."

"If it's really important, I suppose I could spare an hour this evening."

There was a pause, then Quimby responded, "Are you extremely busy now?"

This man Quimby's presumptuous intrusion into my personal schedule would normally have irritated me, but something in his voice had set off an alarm. I had begun to feel more anxious than angry.

"I'm tutoring a student in the Estonian sound system at the moment," I said measuredly. "The session is almost over. Another five minutes, I'd say, if it's important that you see me straightaway."

"Five minutes would be perfect, as I'm rather nearby. I'm calling from Blackwell's in Broad Street."

"I see. Yes, that is rather nearby."

"It's the first place I visit when I come up to Oxford," said Quimby. "In fact, I've just found a most marvelous text on the development of written Estonian. It's by an American. I think I shall buy it for my library."

"Kurman, yes, I'm familiar with it."

"Yes, of course, you would be."

After another pause, I said, "I should really get back to my tutorial, Mr. Quimby."

"Right, well, I'll just pop round in say. . . five minutes."

"That would be good. I gather you know how to find me."

"Yes, I do, but. . . could we possibly meet in the Quadrangle of St. Swithun? It's a favourite of mine."

"Well, yes. . . of course. . . if you wish. . . in five minutes." I started to hang up the receiver. "Oh, how shall I recognize you?"

"I'll have a copy of Kurman's book in my hand," said Quimby.

I replaced the receiver and turned to my tutorial student. He was

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watching me closely.

"Perhaps we should stop for today, Philip," I said. "I have to meet someone presently."

"Certainly, Professor Aalto." He stood up, put on his coat and scarf, then reached for his briefcase. "Thank you for tea, sir."

"You're quite welcome. Tomorrow, we shall look at the boundary separating North Estonian from South Estonian, especially as it relates to certain tri-syllabic stems. In the meantime, I think you should read Raun and Saareste."

"Yes, sir. I think I shall also need to reread the material we covered today. I'm still somewhat vague on the palatalization of consonants."

"So are most Estonians," I said.

Philip smiled.

I saw him out, then watched through the small front window as he began trudging up the path toward High Street.

I picked up my cup of tea from off the table in the parlour. It felt cold, so I set it back down. I knew I was stalling.

I took my coat and hat and scarf from off the rack in the hall, let myself out, and started toward the Quadrangle of St. Swithun.

An old man was standing in the center of the Quad, holding a bright yellow book in his hands. I could easily make out the title: THE DEVELOPMENT OF WRITTEN ESTONIAN. As I reached him, he put out one hand. It was as cold as ice.

"Peter Quimby," he said.

"Kaarlo Aalto."

"Such a pleasure to meet you, Professor Aalto. Your paper on the Emmaste dialect of Northwest Estonian was a brilliant piece of work."

"Thank you."

"An absolutely fascinating language, Estonian."

"Yes, it is."

Quimby smiled. "Lovely, isn't it?" He was looking up and around the Quadrangle.

I continued to look at him. "Yes, lovely."

"These buildings were erected in admirable harmony with the older work, don't you think, exactly to the designs of Bodley and Garner. None of this disgusting modern architecture."

"Yes, it is nice."

"Did you know that it was here that the founding of the October Club was first discussed?" Quimby continued.

"No," I said, "I didn't know that."

"I attended that first meeting. Guy Burgess was there, too." Quimby looked at me. "That's a secret of mine."

"We all have our secrets," I said.

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"Yes, I suppose we do. Shall we walk?"

"If you'd like."

I let Quimby take the lead. We passed through the main gate into High Street and turned toward Magdalen Bridge. The trees that lined the banks of the Cherwell were bare now and the meadows a dull brown.

When we reached the middle of Magdalen Bridge, Quimby stopped and turned to face me.

"I know that you've been invited to give a series of lectures to the Academic Society for the Study of Estonian in Tallinn next month," he said. "I want you to do something for me while you're there."

He had completely taken me off-guard. It took me a moment to reply. "I only received that invitation a half hour before you rang me up," I said. How could you possibly know that?"

Quimby looked at me with tired, bored eyes. "I am the head of a small but significant section that concerns itself with linguistic matters of importance to Her Majesty's Government. We have our finger on most things of this sort. I personally have a standing warrant from the Home Secretary to intercept all mail from Estonia."

Quimby spoke in a way that made me feel as though I should not be at all surprised. It was then that I remembered the condition of the envelope when I had received the letter.

"Are you telling me you're a spy, Mr. Quimby?"

"I don't actually think of myself as a spy, Professor Aalto. I am, however, part of DI6's internal structure." He paused. "Shall I continue?"

"If you wish," I said. I was sure I had no choice.

"I met a woman in Tallinn during the war," Quimby told me. "I want you to find her for me."

"Why me?" I asked. "Don't you have your own people who do this sort of thing?"

"This is a personal request, Professor Aalto, not an official one. Besides, you shall soon have a very good reason for being in Tallinn."

"I have no intention of accepting the invitation," I said. "I have other plans."

Quimby seemed genuinely surprised.

I began to feel as though I were gaining ground. "Why is it so important that you find this woman after all these years? Were you lovers?"

"What an impertinent question!" said Quimby. Almost embarrassed, he admitted, "Yes, we were lovers."

I wondered what he had been like as a lover, this cold, shrivelled old man.

"Why haven't you looked for her before?" I asked. "Why have you waited until now?"

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"My wife died last year," said Quimby. "There was never the opportunity before." It was then that he looked at me almost pleadingly. "Will you please help me?"

"I really do think I understand why you want to find this woman," I assured him, "but as I told you, I have no intention of accepting the invitation."

"Professor Aalto, the many excellent articles that you have published on Estonian grammar are the reason for this invitation. You are one of the world's leading authorities on the subject. How can you possibly not accept this invitation?"

"I suppose, Mr. Quimby, that everything any of us ever does is calculated to our advantage. I write articles on Estonian grammar not only because the subject interests me, but also to impress the right people. I have not been writing to impress the Estonians; I have been writing to impress the Americans! I am now in contact with Indiana University about the possibility of a visiting professorship in Estonian. I hope I shall soon be in Bloomington, not in Tallinn. But I suppose you already know that."

Quimby looked at me stonily for several moments, then he murmured, "I suppose I should tell you that I know you are not really Kaarlo Aalto."

I felt myself clutching the sides of the bridge for support.

"You are Erich Perleberg," he continued. "You were born in 1936 in Rostock. Your father was Karl Perleberg. He was a high-ranking member of the Abwehr II in Tallinn during the war, responsible for Operation Erna. You and your mother lived with him in Tallinn until the three of you escaped to Helsinki in 1945, with forged papers. Your father died in 1967. You continued to live with your mother until seven years ago, when you came to Oxford. Your mother still lives outside Helsinki. Shall I go on?"

"You bastard! This has all been a game with you, hasn't it?"

"I am a firm believer in life going on, Professor Aalto," said Quimby. "We all had to pick up the pieces after the war. But sometimes we are called upon to help other people in need and we have no choice but to do so."

"You disgust me, Quimby, you and your kind. Do you enjoy playing games with other people's lives?"

"Now, now, Professor Aalto, am I really asking so much of you? Am I really?"

"And if my answer is still no?"

"As I see it, you have three very good reasons to say yes. You have immigrated to Britain using false papers. You shall have to be returned to Finland. Of course, this could cause the Finnish government some

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embarrassment, since the cornerstone of its foreign policy is to appease the Soviet Union at all cost. What would the Russians think if it became known that the wife and son of a former Abwehr II officer, a man responsible for the deaths of thousands of Russian soldiers, were living near Helsinki? I also doubt very seriously if the Americans would be interested in issuing a visa to the son of an ex-Nazi officer, so you would have to forget about your visiting professorship at Indiana University. Yes, life could indeed become quite difficult for you, Professor Aalto."

Standing there in the bitter cold, looking into the unblinking eyes of this old man, I remembered that day in 1945 when we arrived in Helsinki from Estonia. We sat down together in the kitchen of our small flat and began memorizing the details of our new identities. Over the next few weeks, I gradually became Kaarlo Aalto. In those grim days after the war, it was easier to become someone else, for no one seemed to care who you were. It was enough that the war was over. I soon forgot who I had been. For my mother and father, however, there always remained the fear that our true identities would be discovered, a fear that lessened only slightly as the years passed. Now, the reasons for their fears had come home to me. I had been caught in the trap they had always feared. Traps of this kind knew no frontiers.

"What do you want me to do?" I asked.

"I wonder if we could perhaps discuss the particulars over tea," said Quimby. It was the voice of a man who knew he had won.

"As you wish." We recrossed the bridge and started back into High Street toward the gates of Magdalen College.

"I was parachuted into Estonia on the night of October 14th, 1944," said Quimby, then he took a sip of tea. "It was over Kolga Bay, a small inlet on the northern coast, less than 124 kilometres from Leningrad. When I landed, there were German troops all around, but I made it to the edge of the forest before they found me, and lost them in the heavy rain. I had to abandon all my radio equipment, though, and to scrap my mission. Toward morning, I came upon a cottage. There was a woman inside, alone." Quimby stopped. He took a faded photograph from out of his wallet and handed it to me. "Her name was Liisa Valga. Her husband, she said, had been shot two months before by the Germans. She never told me why and I didn't ask.

"We became lovers. I stayed with her until the Germans stopped looking for me. After about a month, she helped me escape to Sweden. We went first to her sister's house in Tallinn. There, I was smuggled aboard a fishing boat that took me to Gotland. Her sister's name was Annikki Poolsaar, I remember that. The address was Number 10 Ratagkaevu

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Street, just up from Kiek in de Kok, near St. Nicholas Church. It's there I think you should begin your search for Liisa."

We sat for a while in silence, drinking our tea, then, as Quimby looked on, I wrote a letter to the Academic Society for the Study of Estonian, kindly accepting their invitation. When I had finished, Quimby insisted that it would be no trouble whatsoever for him to post it on his way back to London.

One no longer travels directly to Tallinn from anywhere outside the Soviet Union. I left Heathrow on Aeroflot flight number 244, an Illusian 63, at 09.05 and arrived at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport at 14.25. The weather had been awful. A storm over Riga had caused the plane to shudder violently.

In Moscow, I boarded a smaller Illusian for a flight to Leningrad. When I arrived at Pulkovo Airport, a third flight awaited me, a shorter one over the Gulf of Finland into Tallinn.

It was raining when we landed, which only accented the medieval architecture of the city. There, just as I remembered, was the soaring steeple of the Town Hall, topped by Old Toomas, a flag and a sword in his hands, keeping watch to warn the city of an enemy attack. He had been very busy over the centuries.

An Intourist bus took me from the airport to the Hotel Tallinn, a reddish-brown five story building on Gagarini Boulevard, near Noukogude Street. My room was on the fourth floor.

After I had unpacked, I sat down on the bed and unfolded the map of Tallinn that I had picked up in London. I was only a few blocks from the address which Quimby had given me. I looked at my watch. There was still some time before dinner. I knew that I couldn't put off the inevitable; I needed to start looking for Liisa Valga.

Number 10 Ratagkaevu Street was a three story building. The ancient emblem of a Tallinn chemist—a serpent curled round a mortar—hung over the front door. Curtains fluttered from the windows of the upper two storys. I opened the door and walked inside.

The interior was very old fashioned, much of it probably dating from before the war. It reminded me of the chemist's my mother had often taken me to during the occupation. It was not well-stocked.

A young woman in a white smock was standing behind a counter at the rear. She was attaching labels to amber-coloured bottles. She looked up when I entered. She seemed surprised to see me. *"Tere obtust,"* she said, then, "may I help you?"

"I should like a small packet of aspirin."

The woman reached behind her and picked up a green and white box, covered with cellophane. "Will there be anything else?"

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"What makes a person want to confess his crimes? Is it that he believes so much in the essential humanity of his interrogator that he simply will not allow himself to believe that this same interrogator could be responsible for putting him to death?"

"You remind me of someone I once met in Helsinki," I said abruptly.

The woman looked puzzled. "But I've never been to Helsinki," she said.

"Her name was Annikki Poolsaar," I added hurriedly, and watched to see if the name meant anything. It didn't.

"It is not my name," the woman's voice was firm.

"Have you worked here long?" I asked.

The question seemed to frighten her. "I have work to do," she said. "There are several prescriptions that must be labeled before I can leave."

"If you could just. . ." But the fear in her eyes stopped me. "Thank you very much," I said, then I turned and left the shop.

I walked back to the hotel, feeling alternately foolish and angry. How was I possibly going to do what Quimby had asked me to do?

I collected my room key from the desk clerk. He handed me a message. A car would be sent for me the next morning at half past eight, it read, to take me to the lecture hall at the Academy of Sciences.

I went to my room and undressed, then I got into bed and began reading through my lecture notes. All I wanted now was to forget about Quimby and his lost love.

Almost exactly an hour later, there was a knock at my door. A man was standing there when I opened it. I knew immediately that he was Russian. He reminded me of the Russians I had seen in Helsinki when I was a boy. Their clothes never fit. This man's suit hung loosely on his ample frame and gave him a clownish appearance. My first impression was to laugh. His face, however, indicated that he was serious about the reason he had come to see me.

"Yes?" Unfortunately, I couldn't keep my voice from breaking.

"I should like to speak with you, Professor Aalto."

"I was in bed," I said. "I have a lecture to deliver tomorrow. Can it wait?"

"I am aware of why you have come to Tallinn," the man responded, "but there are some questions I should like very much to ask you now."

He would not be denied, I knew, so I gave in to the inevitable. I didn't even bother to ask him for identification. I was quite sure he was Quimby's opposite.

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"Please come in," I said. I indicated a chair in a corner of the room, then I sat down on the edge of the bed. "What is it that you wanted to ask me?"

"My name is Petrikov. A Miss Kadriorg, who works in a chemist's shop in Ratagkaevu Street, has reported several things which disturb me."

I tried to remain calm. "Really? I can't imagine what they could be."

"She has reported that you questioned her at length."

"Well, I should not say that I questioned her at length. I did ask the woman a question, yes, but it was because she reminded me of someone I once met in Helsinki. I told her that."

"We ourselves are questioning the woman now, Professor Aalto. I'm sure we shall determine if she ever met you in Helsinki."

I could tell that I wasn't going to get out of this predicament easily. "I really do think you're making entirely too much of this, Mr. Petrikov. It all started because I didn't feel well; I think it must have been a long flight. I wanted to walk around the city some before I retired; I thought the fresh air would make me feel better. I just happened by the chemist's and I remembered that I needed some aspirin. The woman in the shop reminded me of someone. That's all. Have I committed a crime?"

"Actually, Professor Aalto, that's what I'm trying to determine."

I stood up, trying to act indignant. "I am a guest in this country, Mr. Petrikov. I have been invited here because I am an expert in Estonian grammar. But at this moment I do not feel that I am being treated as a guest should be treated! I have done nothing wrong!"

Petrikov inhaled on his cigarette, held the smoke in his lungs for what seemed like an inordinately long time, then exhaled slowly. "Please sit down, Professor Aalto," he said.

I did as I was told.

"I should like for you to think about all of this," Petrikov continued. He stood up. "Perhaps you will have some better answers for me next time. I shall send a car to fetch you after your lectures tomorrow afternoon at the Academy of Sciences."

I could think of nothing to say, so I simply watched as Petrikov let himself out.

I hardly slept that night. By the time I was able to shave and get dressed the next morning, it was time to leave for the lecture hall at the Academy of Sciences. The car had already arrived and was waiting for me in front of the hotel.

My reception at the lecture hall was very formal; almost cold, I'd say. I was certain that Petrikov had informed those there of the events of the previous evening.

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I stumbled through my first lecture, failing to answer satisfactorily several of the more technical questions put to me.

Lunch was no better. Even though I had had no breakfast, I found that I could hardly eat. The fact that I sat through the meal, picking at my food, did nothing to enhance my standing with those in attendance.

The afternoon session was even worse. It was almost a relief when it was over and I was able to collapse in the back of the car that Petrikov had sent to fetch me.

Our destination was Victory Square and the Headquarters of the Central Committee of the Estonian Communist Party. The driver parked the car, then got out and opened the door for me. I wondered if everyone taken in for questioning was afforded such courtesies.

The driver took me to an office on the fourth floor. Petrikov was sitting behind a desk, smoking a cigarette and signing some papers. Another man was sitting on a chair in a corner. We weren't introduced.

I sat down in a chair in front of Petrikov's desk. The driver left. Petrikov continued to smoke and sign the papers. The other man just sat and looked at me. I needed badly to go to the W.C.

This whole thing had become a nightmare. I should have called Quimby's bluff. That was all it was, I was sure. What could he really have done to me? He was a senile old man, lusting after what most assuredly would turn out to be a senile old woman. I must be half-crazy myself, thinking I should be able to find Liisa Valga after all these years.

"Well, Professor Aalto?"

I looked up. It was Petrikov who had spoken. "Well, what?"

"Shall we continue our little talk?"

It is strange how the mind works. What makes a person want to confess his crimes? Is it that he believes so much in the essential humanity of his interrogator that he simply will not allow himself to believe that this same interrogator could be responsible for putting him to death? Or is the stress on a person so great that he simply reaches a point where he no longer cares what happens? I once read somewhere that in many criminal cases the only real evidence is the confession itself. If the criminal had not confessed, he would have gone free.

I looked steadily at Petrikov. "You were right, I did lie to you last evening."

Petrikov wasn't prepared for that. Neither was the man in the chair.

"Oh, really?" was all Petrikov was able to say, when he finally regained his composure.

"Yes," I said. "I did go to that chemist's shop on purpose, only I didn't know what would be there. I only had an address."

"And where did you get this address, Professor Aalto?" asked the man

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sitting in the corner.

"I got it from a man named Quimby in London. He holds some position with the British Intelligence. He's blackmailing me."

This was more than Petrikov could stand. He left the room hurriedly, while the man in the corner continued to stare at me unbelievingly.

When Petrikov returned, he had two other men with him. I was allowed to go to the W.C., then we went to a larger room. There, I told them everything that had happened to me, omitting only the part about my real identity. I also gave them the photograph of Liisa that Quimby had given me. "If I had not come to Tallinn, Quimby would have made sure that I could not possibly have been considered for a visiting professorship in Estonian at Indiana University," I said. "The man is quite mad!"

"We understand," said one of the new men. He was smiling.

Then they all left and I was alone to think about what I had done. I wondered if I had actually committed a crime by telling them about Quimby, since his request of me had been unofficial. There was no one I could think of whom I could ask.

Petrikov returned presently. He was smiling. He sat down beside me. I actually expected him to put his arm around my shoulders.

"You're in a very unusual position, Professor Aalto." He smiled.

I wasn't quite sure how to reply, so I said nothing.

"Our files indicate that Liisa Valga was shot by the Germans in 1945," Petrikov continued. "We have nothing on her sister. . ."

I sighed and looked down at the floor.

". . .which means, of course, that if you tell this man Quimby the truth, he will most probably not believe you."

"Most probably."

"We, however, have arrived at a possible solution to the problem."

I looked up. "Oh, really?"

Petrikov smiled. "I am sure that we should be able to find someone who could become this Liisa Valga."

"Why would you want to do that?"

"Come now, Professor Aalto. Don't be so naive. Surely you must realize that this man Quimby could be of some use to us."

"Oh, I see. . . but he'd know she wasn't the real Liisa Valga, wouldn't he?"

"Not necessarily, Professor Aalto. We have her description from the photograph you gave us, and after all this time, memories have dimmed and Liisa could not be expected to remember every detail of their short affair. Don't you agree?"

"Well, I suppose you're right."

"I'm sure 'our' Liisa would be able to convince this man Quimby that

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she is the same Liisa who hid him from the Germans in 1944 and became his lover."

I stood up. "Now, let me make sure I understand all of this," I said. "You're saying that you'll supply Quimby with a surrogate Liisa and I'll not have any interference from him regarding my visiting professorship?"

"Exactly, Professor Aalto," said Petrikov. He laughed. "It's really all very simple."

"Nothing," I said, "is ever as simple as it seems."

The rest of the week went very well. My lectures were well-received, and I answered all the questions put to me on the most intricate linguistic problems in Estonian. I was, all in all, a smashing success.

A smiling Quimby met me at Heathrow when I returned to London.

"She rang me up from Tallinn this morning!" He was exhultant; he could hardly contain himself.

"Really? That's wonderful!" Petrikov had evidently lost no time in finding the surrogate Liisa.

"I can't thank you enough, Professor Aalto, for what you've done for me. You've made me a very happy man. I feel almost guilty, having proposed it to you the way I did."

"I shouldn't give it another thought if I were you, Mr. Quimby," I said. "I'm just glad you're happy."

"The least I can do is drive you up to Oxford," Quimby offered.

"No, no, I'll take the train from Paddington. I just want to be by myself. I hope you'll understand."

"I do understand, old chap, but at least let me drop you off at Paddington."

Old chap, was it now? "All right," I said.

"She sounded exactly as I had remembered," Quimby said, as we headed into London, "but tell me, what did she look like?"

"She looked exactly like the photograph you gave me, only older, of course."

"Oh, that reminds me, could you please return that?"

Oh, damn, I thought, I had left it in Tallinn with Petrikov. "I left it with Liisa. She wanted to keep it." I was amazed at how quickly the lie had come. I could only hope that "Liisa" could lie as well.

"Oh, well, all right. I'll get it back when I see her."

"Tell me about your plans;" I was anxious to steer Quimby away from the subject of the photograph.

"We're going to meet in Finland," he said. "She wanted me to come

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to Estonia, but of course I told her I'd prefer to meet somewhere else."

"Will they actually let her out?" I asked.

"They let the old ones go anywhere they want to," said Quimby. "Fewer mouths to feed, you know. I've already telegraphed her the money for the trip."

We had reached Paddington. I was glad, for I didn't think I could stand to keep up the charade much longer. I kept telling myself that what I had done to Quimby was for my own self-preservation. What would he do to me, though, I wondered, if he ever found out? Of course, by the time he did, he would be so far in over his head that he couldn't possibly expose me without exposing himself.

"Thanks for the lift," I said. I turned and started walking toward the station.

"Just a minute!" Quimby called after me. "I almost forgot. This came for you while you were gone."

I walked back to the car.

Quimby handed me an envelope. It had already been opened.

It was a letter from the Department of Finno-Ugric Languages at Indiana University, inviting me to be Visiting Professor of Estonian for the following academic year. I decided not to ask Quimby how he came to have the letter.

"Thanks," I said. I turned and started walking back toward the station. I hoped to hell I never saw that man again.

On the trip up to Oxford, I tried to erase from my mind most of what had happened and to think only of what was to be. I was only moderately successful.

When we arrived, I walked from the station to my quarters at the college. The telephone was ringing when I let myself in. I didn't want to answer it, but it kept ringing. I finally picked up the receiver.

"Professor Aalto?" The accent was definitely Russian.

"Yes?"

"Mr. Petrikov would like very much for me to come round and chat with you a bit."

Good God, I thought. I said, "Really? What about?"

There was a slight pause, then the voice went on, "There are a few things he'd like for you to do for him while you're in America." ■

SPY TALK: *Paper Mills* - a pejorative term used to describe those individuals who constantly turn up on some intelligence agency doorstep trying to sell "sensitive" or "TOP SECRET" papers.

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are there any secrets left?

by Jack Gerson

The walls were oak panelled, dark, with a suggestion of dust in the ridges of the panelling. The desk, indeed all the furnishings were heavy. *Victorian-ugly,* Tom Matheson told himself. Perhaps they matched the old man behind the desk, complemented him by era and design.

"After Burgess and MacLean," Carteret went on, "there was the third man: Kim Philby. Good old Kim. I was fond of him. Still am. They tell me he's retired now. With the rank of colonel in the KGB."

"He was KGB all the time, wasn't he?" Matheson ventured.

"Oh, yes. Since he was at Cambridge. Thorough traitor; did untold damage. But you know all that. And then there was Geoffrey Blunt: the fourth man. And the press postulated a fifth, a sixth and so on. At one time I was convinced the whole of MI6 was composed of Russian agents. Except for myself, of course."

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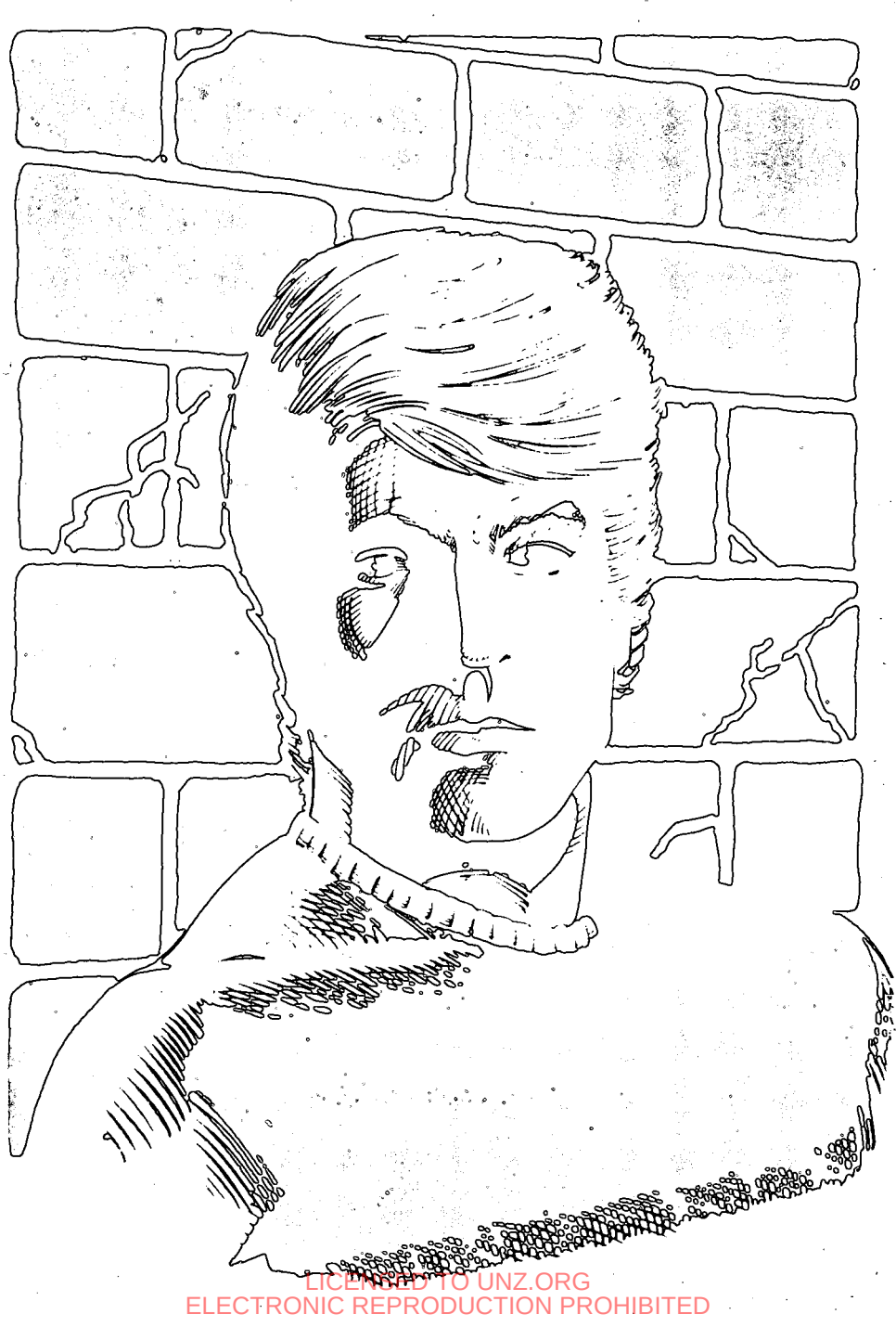

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Carteret lit a cigarette, and coughed a deep hacking, smoker's cough. The old man rarely stopped smoking. The medical officer had told him some years before that he was shortening his life. Carteret had only smiled, a twisted smile, as he lit another cigarette.

"I'm seventy-one. By how much can I shorten it now?"

And now he must be seventy-six, Matheson reckoned, *and still working.* Of course, he'd been retired at sixty-five, the normal civil service age, but four years later, they'd brought him back. Because they could trust him. Because they could be sure he was untainted by Russian infiltration.

"Anyway," Carteret went on, "they've done it again, as you know. George Wheeler has disappeared . . . probably enroute to Moscow by this time."

Matheson had heard. The word had been round the department that morning. Of course it had not yet reached the press, but that would happen in due course. It couldn't be hidden. Wheeler had been their man in Bonn, and then in Austria. The damage, to echo Carteret, would be untold.

Carteret went on. "He's blown the German network and certainly scared our people in Austria and Czechoslovakia. And the CIA are going to be furious. They'll stop collaborating for a year or so. They always do. As if they have no traitors; as if they have no KGB men in their organization. I suspect they have a great many, but are not so adept at weeding them out. However, that is their concern."

"And ours?"

"Wheeler was almost certainly not working alone. You have to find the other man." A small smile crept around the old man's lips. *"The second man* of this *second edition,* we might say."

Matheson took a deep breath. "Why me? Why not Collyer? Or Bill Hastings? Or Reggie Scott-ffolliot?"

"Because it is almost certain that one of them will be our second man. Our other KGB colleague."

"I don't like it," said Matheson and was at once amazed at his own temerity. He had never before questioned Carteret. Why now?

The old man answered as if reading his mind. "Of course you don't. No one likes to investigate their own colleagues. No one likes the sight of treason, or the nastier word: treachery. Implying not just abstract betrayal but personal betrayal, directed against friends. Ugly. But you'll do it. You'll find the man for me."

"But . . . but are you so sure of me?"

"Matheson, you're not one of the public school elite. You

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didn't come to us from Eton or Harrow, Oxford or Cambridge. You came from a decent middle-class Scottish background. State school, Edinburgh University, Army Intelligence Corps . . ."

Eight years ago, Matheson remembered. A degree in languages, and into the army. They wanted people who could speak Russian and German, and he'd been fluent in both. "Learn Russian," his uncle advised him; that practical man, the uncle who brought him up when his parents were killed in a car accident. "Going to need Russian speakers," his uncle insisted, "at least until they blow each other up." So he had learned Russian. And the commission in the army had taken him to Berlin, to the Embassy in Moscow, and finally to Military Intelligence 6.

And now to the dirty job of spying on his fellows. These were his colleagues at Century House, HQ of MI6. Not that Carteret had his office there. When the old man had come back, he had insisted on moving out of the once established office of 'C', as if he could view with more detachment the activities of the department from afar; afar being a one-time safe house in Bloomsbury.

Of course, Matheson knew he had to begin with Wheeler. There was no doubt now George Wheeler had been working for the KGB. For six months before he had disappeared, he had been under surveillance. There had been clandestine meetings with a so-called trade secretary from the Russian Embassy. These had usually taken place in such public places as Regent's Park Zoo, a cafe in the Fulham Road, a tea-shop in Hampstead, a public lavatory near the House of Commons. Scotland Yard's Special Branch had followed him, photographed him, prepared a watertight case against him. Or almost. Before he could be arrested, Wheeler had departed, direction east.

The Special Branch, Matheson knew, would still be working on the investigation. The aim was to ferret out any fellow KGB men in MI6. But Carteret wanted his own investigation. Find any traitor before the police; *cleanse one's self*, would be his motto. And Matheson would be his instrument. It had to be one of three, Matheson knew. One of four, if he included himself as the other duty officer. Only, Matheson knew, he, himself, was not KGB. And so, it now appeared, did Carteret.

Now the problem was, where to start the investigation. To begin at the beginning: Mrs. George Wheeler. As yet, Laura Wheeler was still installed in a large apartment in Chelsea.

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She was, according to background material on her husband, thirty-five years old, an attractive (this, from one glossy photograph) former model. Daughter of a retired Major General in the Coldstream Guards, she had been educated at Beneden and Roedean. That meant money and privilege: Seventeen years ago, she had been a popular debutante on the London society scene. Sheer physical beauty had led to a short but brilliant career in modelling, terminated by her marriage to Major George Wheeler, Harrow, Cambridge, Sandhurst and the Household Cavalry. And eventually into MI6. George Wheeler, whose father had been British Ambassador to various Middle Eastern nations. A true-Brit, it seemed to Matheson, as it had seemed to MI6 when they had recruited him.

Also, unbeknown to everyone except the Russians, a closet-Communist.

Matheson had never met Laura Wheeler. He had seen her portrait, taken by Lord Snowdon, on George's desk. He had admired it, but there had been no social contact with the Wheelers. Only, if Matheson could admit it, a tinge of envy at a colleague with a beautiful wife and an expensive apartment. Matheson lived in a bed-sitting room in Hornsey. Not fashionable. Not expensive. Not even attractive. A room with a washstand basin, a gas-fire, a bed, a table, two chairs, a wardrobe and a row of books. Also, Matheson was unmarried. Several brief encounters and two long affairs were all in the past and three months of celibacy had been infinitely depressing. Well, now he had to meet Laura Wheeler—before she decided to follow her husband east. That was always a possibility.

The sun was shining; the trees in Bloomsbury Square green, as befitted a hot London summer. Even the grey bulk of the British Museum seemed to reflect the greenery of its surrounding trees. Only the grey unpleasantness of his assignment served to depress Matheson.

He drove to Chelsea, depressed, a sour taste in his mouth. The flavour of treachery, he told himself.

The apartment block in Chelsea was expensive and ill-designed, built in the fifties in the style of the twenties. A porter, in a uniform that might have been created for a bad Viennese operetta, admitted him, and a well-oiled elevator took Matheson to the eighth floor where the carpets were thick in the corridor.

Laura Wheeler opened the door, herself — which surprised Matheson, who thought, in this setting, there should be a

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French maid. She was a beautiful woman; tallish, slender, one of those women who matured from prettiness to beauty as she grew older. She was dressed in a simple dress and wore one row of pearls. She was wrong for the wife of a Communist, even a British public school Communist. No bourgeois-intellectual pretense. Certainly not of working class origin. Breeding, self-assurance, and elegance. And sensuality.

"Mrs. Wheeler," he said awkwardly, "my name is. . ."

He was allowed to say nothing more. With a small secret smile, she put her arms around his neck and kissed him. He had, at that moment, exhaled and found, temporarily, that he couldn't breath. The kiss was long, intense, and expressed a comfortable familiarity.

"Darling Tom," she said a moment later, this woman he had never met before. "I'm so happy you can come here now."

Then, taking his hand, she drew him into the small hallway, shut the door behind him, and led him into a large comfortable sitting room. And sat him in a deep armchair.

"A drink?" she said. "Your usual?"

He said *yes* without thinking, and then wondered what his usual would turn out to be. She poured him a small, neat brandy. It was his usual tipple.

"Mrs. Wheeler," he said, deciding to start all over again.

Again she interrupted him. "Laura. You can call me Laura now. Nobody can hear us."

"But. . ." he said, and stopped. He didn't know what to say.

"Now that George has gone, you can come here anytime," she went on, oblivious of his bafflement. "Much better than your room in Hornsey. And I'll be damned glad to see the last of that single bed. Always one on top of the other. No scope for variations, darling."

He gulped the brandy, and then took a deep breath. Not to think about her knowledge of his room in Hornsey or his single bed. The breath and then the straightforward statement.

"Mrs. Wheeler, I've never met you until just now." It came out with the one exhalation, words running together. She stopped pouring herself what looked like a gin and tonic and, turning, stared at him.

"Not a joke," she said evenly, "so what is it?"

"I've just said it," he replied.

A pause. Then something dawned on her and she grinned. Her voice dropped to a whisper.

"Have they bugged the room?"

"Look, I don't know what this is about. . ." he went on, ineffectually, "but I've never seen you until two minutes ago."

"They *have* bugged the room!"

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"Not to my knowledge."

"But just in case. . .?"

"In case of what?" The conversation was becoming incomprehensible.

"I don't care," she said. "It doesn't matter now George has gone."

Matheson seized on this. "George has gone, then? Where?"

"Oh, he'll be in Leningrad by this time," she replied. "I told him I would never join him. I mean, can you imagine me living in Russia?"

He couldn't.

"I don't give a damn about his political ideas, but I know I could never live in Russia. Of course, when he told me, it didn't surprise me; just made me wish he'd been working for the CIA. I mean, I could endure New York and Washington. But Moscow?" she visibly shuddered.

"You knew he was working for the KGB?" Matheson asked.

"A couple of years ago."

"And you weren't shocked?"

She looked surprised. "No. Shocked? Why should I be? I mean, it's all politics. And I know nothing about politics."

"It was more than politics. It is treason."

She pouted. "Anyway, I was too busy. With us. You and I."

Matheson felt cold. She was talking nonsense again.

"Look," he said. "You and I. . .we don't exist. I've never met. . ."

She cut in on him. "Oh, I know we had to pretend it wasn't happening then, but not now. And why should I be shocked about George. I knew about you."

Matheson thought, *must keep control of this insane conversation, mustn't let this strange woman confuse me.*

"Why did you know about me?" He couldn't resist asking the question although he knew it fed her fantasy.

"About you and. . .and them," she replied. It was her answer and no answer.

He rose. He was hot, the room was stifling, his mind was on some kind of roller-coaster. What was this woman trying to do? Confuse him, tie him in knots? She had succeeded.

"I must go," he said.

"But why?" You don't have to go. There's the bedroom. My bed. For the first time, mine instead of yours. Darling, I've been waiting. . ."

You'll have to wait a little longer, he told himself. *No, a great deal longer, lady.*

He said, "Goodbye."

"You'll be back?" she asked. Not just asked, demanded.

"I may have to question you further," he said, formally, and left. Quickly.

Outside, the sun had gone behind a cloud and the King's Road looked distinctly grey. Matheson found a cafe and sat

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hunched over a coffee trying to make sense of Laura Wheeler.

It took him half an hour but he reached a conclusion: The woman had been having an affair, all right, with one of the other three. Harry Collyer, Bill Hastings, or Scott-ffolliot. Which one? If he knew that . . . But she was clever. Substitute Tom Matheson for her lover and completely unsettle him. Either that, or her husband's defection had driven her out of her mind.

He tried to think, which of the three would she be likely to have an affair with? Collyer? No, surely not. Harry Collyer was five feet four inches in height. The image of him going to bed with tall, stately Laura Wheeler was comical in the extreme. Almost sexually perverse. Bill Hastings? There was a possibility. Good-looking, clean-cut, all-British boy. Looked like one of those perfect young men in American television series. Bill Hastings, out of *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. Should be at Joan Collins' right hand.

Yet, not quite right. Not as a Russian agent. He was too. . . too British. Or was that his cover? Brilliantly built up over the years.

Reggie Scott-ffolliot? Like his name, the comic Englishman. P.G. Wodehouse out of Charles Dickens. Effete. Not gay but definitely effete. Then again, women went for that kind of thing. Matheson ordered another coffee.

At least, something was going on; the woman's fantasies told him that. One of the three was the second man, Carteret had assured him. And that one was having an affair with Laura Wheeler. These Communists were like that: immoral.

It was lunchtime. The cafe was filled with the smell of garlic. Owned by Italians. He looked at the lunch menu—pastas and saltimbucca. *God,* he thought, *is there nowhere left in London that serves plain English food?*

He was just finishing the saltimbucca when the man sat down heavily in the seat facing him. He was a small man but with enormous shoulders and large hands. His nose was squat and spread over a considerable area of his face. Below it, thick lips; above, slant eyes.

Matheson knew at once he was Russian. Apart from the mongoloid features, the man had steel false teeth—as if his dentist had been a riveter. Of course it meant, also, he was not long in the West. Otherwise he would have availed himself of the National Health Service and procured a decent set of porcelain teeth.

"Sorry I am late."

"Are you late?" said Matheson.

"We were to meet at twelve, comrade," the man went on,

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with an ever-thickening accent.

Matheson stared at the squashed face. He was certain he had never in his life seen the man before, yet there was something familiar about the face.

"You have something for me?" the man asked.

"No."

"You most often have something for me."

"I'm afraid you have mistaken me for someone else."

A pause. The eyes, deep set in folded, yellowing flesh, blinked. "This is the English joke?"

"I don't think so," Matheson replied. Then he realised why the face seemed familiar. The man looked like a movie actor. What was his name? Played tough policemen . . . occasionally decent gangsters. Only in Hollywood could there be such a thing as a decent gangster. Charles Bronson, that was the movie star.

Charles Bronson's lookalike made a face. A sour expression. "Why do you risk asking to see me if you have nothing for me? It is taking the unnecessary chances, no?"

Matheson found the man was becoming an irritant. "Look, I don't know who you are . . ."

"You know who I am. I am Strogoff. Nikolai Alexandrovich Strogoff."

"Never heard of you!"

"You call me Nikki."

"I've never called you anything."

"I call you Tommy."

The only person who had ever called Matheson Tommy was his mother. The man was lying. But with conviction.

Suddenly, the Bronson face broke into a smile. Crevices in the cheeks deepened. Where there had been no crevices, fissures appeared. The man, Strogoff, was definitely smiling. "I understand. We are being observed."

"Are we?"

"If you are under observation, then you must reject me. We are under observation?"

"I don't think so," Matheson said, and at once regretted saying it. Otherwise he might have been rid of the man.

Again Strogoff frowned. "Then why you do this? Your friend, Wheeler, he never did this." Strogoff pronounced Wheeler with a V. 'Vheeler.'

Exasperation welled up in Matheson. "Look, I don't know you. I've never seen you before just now. I don't know what you want or what the hell you're playing at."

Strogoff's frown became a scowl. "It is becoming too much for you, yes? The tension, the subterfuges; too, too much. This way, you become dangerous. A threat. It is a pity."

Strogoff stood, his face still peering down at Matheson, features even closer than before. "Is great pity. Indeed, is. You

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"He felt a shiver run through his body. Cold, ice cold; the caress of fear. Someone was rigging the evidence to show Matheson was the traitor."

become a danger to yourself, to all of us. Yes, great pity."

"And what is that supposed to mean?"

Strogoff shrugged, looking bleak. "It means you are becoming a wet job." The Bronson-type face nodded and then, turning on his heels, Strogoff left the cafe.

Matheson felt relieved, but his relief was short-lived. Wet job! He'd heard the expression before. He'd heard all the expressions. The CIA used their own: "Eliminate with extreme prejudice," or "rub out." The British referred to the "deep six." And the Russians used "wet job." Did nobody ever say someone had to be killed?

After driving back to the offices of Bloomsbury, Matheson, ignoring amiable nods from colleagues, went to his small, coffin-shaped office and, from the filing section, obtained Wheeler's duty diary and a list of all secret files used by the man before his defection.

All this told him little. Wheeler had access to much secret information, but this was no surprise. All such material would now be common-knowledge in Moscow. Matheson decided to concentrate on the possible second man. The Ethiopian in the fuel system, as the late, great W.C. Fields would have said.

The registry of file withdrawals covered everyone in the building who was permitted access. Scott-ffolliot had withdrawn five files, but all of these were connected with his area of operations. The same could be said of Bill Hastings. And Collyer, who was engaged in tracking down a leakage in a naval dockyard in Scotland, had requested no access to secret material for over six months.

As a matter of course, Matheson checked on anyone else who had access to the files.

And found that one individual had been drawing files regularly, two or three a day. God, in a few weeks one could know everything! He turned to the Registry log to see who had signed for all these files.

And then he started to shake. The name was clear, legible and left one in no doubt as to the man's identity: *T. Matheson.*

His own signature—without any doubt. Yet, he knew he had

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not signed for those files over all those weeks. Someone had skillfully forged his signature. Very skillfully. Matheson couldn't have sworn it was a forgery, except that he knew he had never signed for those files.

He returned the register to the file room. Despite the curious eyes of Tanner, the chief filing clerk, he returned it without comment.

He went home. Not by car. He only used a car from the section car-pool when on official business; otherwise he preferred London Transport.

The first attempt was made at Russell Square Tube Station. It was classic in its simplicity, a cliche of assassination: Matheson, on a busy underground platform, waiting for his train. The platform jammed with people. And then the train was coming out of the tunnel, and Matheson was pushed heavily from behind.

He tottered on the edge of the platform, regained his balance and twisted around to face his assailant. A bland little man faced him, bald head shining in the lights of the platform, hands still forward, palms upward.

The bald man came at him again. Matheson stepped aside, pushing back a section of the crowd intent only on boarding the on-coming train.

Of his own volition, the bald man plunged forward, tottered, as had Matheson, on the edge of the platform, and, unlike his intended victim, was not able to regain his balance. He fell forward as the train reached him, was struck on the shoulder by the side of the driver's cabin, and knocked forward. Like a rag-doll, arms flailing the air.

Struck a second time, the bald man was thrown downwards and, with one short, sharp scream, he hit the live rail and disappeared under the train.

Several women screamed. The train, belatedly, came to a halt. The doors opened and disembarking passengers pushed into those stunned and immobile with shock. Matheson took the opportunity to push his way through the milling crowd and make for the exit.

Back in the evening warmth of Russell Square, bathed in the orange light of a dying sun, he walked quickly towards Euston Square. He knew the attempt had been made. There was no need to linger, or even become involved in what would inevitably be written off as a tragic accident in the Tube station.

But now, as he walked, he started to think. His first reaction had been to assume the Russians had decided quickly to be rid of him. Yet, further

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consideration brought another thought: The man he was hunting had arranged for his death. Or someone in the Section had seen the signatures on the files; seen them and presumed Matheson was a traitor. The next step would surely be his elimination.

He felt a shiver run through his body. Cold, ice cold; the caress of fear. Tomorrow he must see Carteret again; inform the old man of all he had discovered. Someone was rigging the evidence to show Matheson was the traitor. Matheson had been assigned to uncover just such evidence, but not, for God's sake, against himself.

Hornsey, where he lived, was a neighbourhood of decaying gentility. Once popular middle-class terrace houses had decayed; stucco peeling to show brick-work, bricks crumbling in the polluted London air. Immigrants had divided even the small houses into even smaller living units.

Even the larger, detached houses, once homes of wealthy bourgeois families, were now divided into bed-sitting units. It was in one of these that Matheson lived, surrounded by books, tinned food, a gas-fire and a large television set, his one luxury. Only a few people had been admitted to this undistinguished sanctum. A few girls . . . not Wheeler's wife . . . and only one working colleague, Bill Hastings. He had been invited in for a coffee when he had driven Matheson home after one particularly hectic night when the Russians had taken over the East German network and Military Intelligence 5 and 6 had panicked. That, of course, had been Wheeler's work.

Matheson and Hastings had sat until dawn in the drab bed-sitter, drinking coffee, analysing situations, assessing probable courses of action. The only occasion he'd had a colleague as visitor.

Now he wished Hastings or anyone were there so that he could talk, analyse, assess. Instead, he brewed himself a coffee and glanced through the day's mail. Three letters, two of them bills, and the third, a large envelope, the address awkwardly printed in what appeared to be childish handwriting. He opened it.

A package inside. Opening this, the contents fell into his hand. A booklet containing traveller's cheques to the value of one thousand pounds. Each cheque bore his signature. He had never signed for traveller's cheques, yet there was the signature. Unmistakably his. As had been the signature in the file register. Next to the traveller's cheques was a small bank book. 'Second Bank of

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Geneva.'

He had never heard of the 'Second Bank of Geneva.' Nor had he heard of the four hundred thousand francs credited to him there. Three hundred thousand pounds. From where? From whom? And why?

The last items in the package were airline tickets. Lufthansa flight from London to Stockholm. An Aero-Flot flight from Stockholm to Leningrad. Open tickets, undated.

Matheson spread the contents of the package over the small table he used as a working desk, when it was not in use for meals. He stared down at the various items.

This, he told himself, was the final piece of evidence. Viewed by anyone else it would be conclusive proof that Tom Matheson was the second man, was the undoubted collaborator with Wheeler and the KGB.

How dare they?

How could they possibly expect anyone to believe that he, Tom Matheson . . .?

He shuddered. Again, that icy cold feeling. He rose and went to the window. It looked down onto the street in front of the house. Under a lamppost, two men stood, one smoking a cigarette. A government health warning? Two men watching the house always denoted the watched were not in the best of political health.

Matheson sat by the window for some hours, staring down at those who were staring up. Who were they? KGB? Or Carteret's people? Did it matter anymore?

He slept fitfully and, the next morning, cut himself shaving three times. He caught a Tube train at Archway Station into the centre of the city, and was particularly careful to stand away from the edge of the platform. Once on the train, he opened a morning paper and read of the death of one Eli Ventnor, who had accidentally fallen in front of an underground train in Russell Square Station.

"He's one of their people," the voice murmured in his ear.

A large man in an ill-cut lounge suit had spoken out of the corner of a large mouth. The man had spoken without moving his lips.

"Just who do you mean?" Matheson asked, trying, with difficulty, not to open his lips.

"Them! Carteret's people. They know it's you they want. The second man."

"But it's not me!" Matheson protested, unable now to control both his lips and his indignation.

"But it *is* you," the man replied. "We know it's you. They now know it's you. Even if *you don't*, it doesn't matter, does it?"

"Who the hell are you?"

"Glinka," the man replied.

"Glinka?"

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"I am colleague of Strogoff. This Ventnor, he tries to kill you. They either want you dead or away."

"Away where?"

"Away to us. As a defector. The second man."

"But I'm not the second man," Matheson muttered through gritted teeth. A woman on the opposite side of the carriage glared at him, convinced he was muttering obscenities.

"We know that," Glinka replied. "Obviously, we must know who the second man is. But your people think it is you, thanks to him."

"Who?" Matheson asked dully.

"The second man!" Glinka showed signs of exasperation. "He has set you up to protect himself. Don't worry. Not so bad. We will take you . . . as a bonus."

"I don't want to be a bonus. I'm British. I'm a patriotic citizen. I love this country."

Glinka made a face. "God knows why! Trade unions being destroyed by Thatcher. Taxes never stop going up. The pound falls against the dollar. London hotel prices . . . eugh! Football crowds get more violent. Cinemas keep closing. The longest running play in London is "The Mousetrap!" And this is the country of Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, Byron . . . "

Matheson stared at the feet of commuters on the tube-train. It was true. Depressingly true.

Glinka stood up, gave a short bow and left the tube at King's Cross. Matheson went on to Tottenham Court Road. From there he walked to the office.

Between the four walls of his own room in the building, he took stock of all that had happened in twenty-four hours. It was a sad, ugly picture, and he was neatly framed in the middle of it. Could he prove it, though?

He put in a formal request for certain secret personnel files. A messenger brought them to him. At least his security clearance had not been revoked.

He found what he was looking for ten minutes later: "Ventnor, Eli Habash, North London, Dept. Removal Expert. Only to be used with highest authority."

So Ventnor had been sent by the Department to kill him. And, on the highest authority. That meant Carteret. In twenty-four hours, Carteret had changed his mind; had almost certainly decided that he, Matheson, was the second man.

He had to be convinced otherwise. And at once.

The messenger came back into Matheson's office without knocking. Matheson frowned at this discourtesy. The messenger ignored the frown. "Sorry, Mr. Matheson, but I have to have those classified files from you at once."

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"But you just brought them to me!"

"Your security clearance was withdrawn five minutes ago."

Matheson handed back the files. It had started: withdrawal of his security clearance, building up to his arrest. Inevitably; not at once. They moved with care.

He lifted the phone and asked to be connected with Carteret. There was a long silence. Then the operator came back onto the line. "He's busy. He wants you to meet him tomorrow night at Clifford House. Eighteen-hundred hours. Thank you. Have a nice day."

Clifford House! In the heart of the Suffolk countryside. A damp house, owned by MI6. Used for debriefings and interrogations. The kiss of death! Well, if not of death, of ruination. The place where traitors were broken, where confessions were obtained. That meant Matheson was finished, convicted, written off.

But why give him twenty-four hours? Matheson even knew the answer to that: to give him time to do the decent thing. Like leaving a loaded revolver on his desk. He was now a traitor, an outsider. The decent thing was to remove himself.

They had tried to help him and themselves by attempting to kill him. Now they expected him to do the job himself.

He left the office and walked through Bloomsbury, back to Tottenham Court Road. Then he walked down Charing Cross Road. He walked on and on. Across Piccadilly Circus and down Piccadilly. He lingered outside the Ritz, wishing it was afternoon, and he could have taken afternoon tea inside. He walked into the Green Park and strolled for an hour. It was his way of saying goodbye to London. Despite rising taxes, the falling pound, and "The Mousetrap," he still loved London.

Having said his goodbyes, he took the tube back to Hornsey. And was pleased to be proved right about one thing: He did not possess a revolver, and had never drawn one from the Department. Of course they would know this. A box awaited him among his mail at Hornsey, containing a well-oiled revolver and two bullets; in case his hand trembled and he missed with the first one. They really did expect him to do the decent thing.

He put revolver, box, and the two bullets in the refuse bin at the rear of the house. And he started to pack.

It was much later, on the flight from Stockholm to Leningrad, that Matheson realised he knew who the second man was. Not that he could prove it, but it was there, staring him in the face.

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Laura Wheeler had known he slept in a narrow, single bed. Yet she had never been to his room in Hornsey. Only one person had been in that room from MI6; one man who could pass on that small tid-bit of information to Laura Wheeler. Not that it mattered. Matheson had been tried, convicted and sentenced before he could open his mouth.

He sat back comfortably in his plane seat, wondering what Russia would be like. He had nothing to reproach himself for. He wasn't a traitor. They'd made him one, back in London. Also, he could tell the Russians nothing they didn't already know. Wheeler would have told them everything. There were no secrets left. It was a comforting thought. Nothing with which he could betray his country. And then, he thought, he'd always wanted to see Samarkand, the Winter Palace, even Siberia. There were things to look forward to.

Carteret sat behind his desk, staring at Bill Hastings.

"He's gone. The way of Wheeler. Pity. I trusted him. Until, of course, the evidence piled up. Damn cunning, the way they get at our people."

Hastings agreed. "They find weaknesses and exploit them."

"You'll take over his workcases as well as Wheeler's. At least the department's clean again. I can trust my people now."

Hastings felt warm and at ease when he left the building that evening. *The department was clean again.* He echoed Carteret's thought. It was a good feeling.

By a circuitous route, he made his way to Laura Wheeler's apartment. She greeted him warmly, arms around his neck, her lips wet against his.

"Did I do all right?" she asked later, as they lay in bed together.

"You did just fine. I'd love to have seen Matheson's face... Not that it matters. The work goes on. And on."

Outside the apartment building, Carteret stared at Collyer.

"He is inside?"

"Yes. The note Matheson sent said it all."

Carteret frowned. He'd lost three men to the Russians now, one of them unnecessarily. Damn it, why couldn't Matheson have waited? Not that he'd given him much option, sending him that revolver. Stupid thing to do. And for what?

"When he comes out, arrest Hastings," he said.

As he walked away, he wondered what it was all for. After all, were there any secrets left...? ■

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SAFE

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HOUSE

by Morgiana

It was going to be a long night and they were alone in the house. He decided to ask the question that had troubled him ever since he had been brought there. She laughed, for the first time since the vigil began.

"You mean 'What's a nice girl like me doing running a PLO safe house?' " she asked.

She spoke in Arabic, in which they were both fluent, but the idiom was American. So was she.

She looked up at the ceiling thoughtfully. "I really don't know," she answered in a dream-like tone; "I guess it all started because I wanted long hair."

Her hair fell well below her shoulders, but he did not see what impact it could have on her story. But Iyad and the others would not return for hours, and then he would never see her again, so he did not interrupt.

"Or maybe if it hadn't been so hot that summer," she continued, now staring at some object behind him. She shifted her gaze to meet his. "You see," she explained, "I had just left my fiance. I'm still not sure why. I remember I had been reading *A Doll's House* by Ibsen at the time and I think that had a lot to do with it. His last words to me as I left were 'You're just a foolish woman; you'll never make it on your own.'

"I was nineteen years old, had ten dollars in my purse, and half a tank of gasoline." She smiled at the memory. "With all the upheaval, I missed registration at the university and the first week of class for the summer semester. I was in an accelerated degree program and would lose my scholarship if I sat out, so I did what any other self-respecting woman would have done—I went to the dean of Liberal Arts and cried. At the time, there was a great deal of sympathy on college campuses for runaway housewives, and I think the dean must have read Ibsen, too, because he gave me special permission to register late."

Illustration by Rob Richards

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He wanted to ask which university she had attended, but he realized that if she could tell him she would, and if she couldn't, she wouldn't. Her training, like his own, prevented her from trusting anyone with information that could prove dangerous.

"I was determined to let my hair grow out because Jimmy always made me keep it so short," she said, "and by the time I was able to start attending classes, it had reached the really shaggy stage when you have to fight with it to make it do anything. I had so little time for myself, and it was so hot out anyway, that I got in the habit of folding a bandanna in half and tying it over my head."

He had seen his sisters do the same thing on occasion. He started, thinking that he heard a noise outside. Could they be back so soon? That could only mean they'd succeeded, for if they'd failed so quickly, there would be no coming back.

"No," she sighed, "it's only the wind. I worry about them so much when they're out—even if everything else goes well, they could still get shot on the way home for being out after curfew."

He had seen it many times.

In order to take her mind off her worries, she picked up the narrative again.

"So the day I started school, a week later than everyone else, I had my hair tied back in one of my old red bandannas. All my classes were in the Social Sciences building because I was an Anthropology major—as you may have guessed."

He nodded.

"The last class of the day was 'The Geography of the Middle East,' and I got there just before the bell rang. I stood inside the door and looked around. When you've missed a week of classes, you have to be very careful where you sit. It was a time-honored tradition in Liberal Arts to borrow your notes from whomever sat closest. Obviously, it wouldn't do for me to plop down next to some double-digit I.Q. type. While I was still reviewing my choices, the professor walked in and began arranging his notes. When the bell rang, I had to make a decision fast. Inspiration struck. At the edge of one of those ever-present cliques, but not actually part of it, sat a swarthy man in blue jeans. Thinking that if you've missed a week's worth of notes in Middle Eastern geography, you can't go wrong by sitting next to an

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Arab, I slipped into the seat next to him. Once or twice during the lecture I noticed him giving me a peculiar sideways glance, but I thought he was only surprised at seeing the appearance of a new student so far into the semester. When the lecture ended, I turned to him and introduced myself. He was using a different name, of course, but you know him as Iyad."

Iyad, he thought—so it was Iyad she had followed halfway around the world. He should have known it by the concern with which she had helped him prepare for the night's work. She'd helped all six of the men arm themselves, but she had taken extra care with Iyad's weaponry. At the time, he had thought it was only because the quiet Arab was the leader, and the lives of the other five—in fact, even his own life—depended on him. It was ridiculous for him to feel jealous.

Unaware of what he was thinking, she continued her story.

"What I didn't know is that Iyad was carrying papers that he had been instructed to pass along during the course of the day. Because there was such heavy fighting in Lebanon at the time, he had received only sketchy information, and had no idea how he'd be contacted. He'd followed his normal routine and nothing happened. When, in his last class of the day, he was approached by a strange woman with her hair covered like a proper Moslem, he assumed that was the signal for him to make the drop.

"What he didn't know is that two seats behind him sat a Mossad agent who had arrived at the same conclusion. What neither of them knew was that the operative who was supposed to make the pick-up had gotten wind of the Mossad presence and was waiting at the fallback.

"As I said, Iyad was fairly certain that I was his contact, but he wanted to make sure I wasn't who I said I was—if you follow me. He said softly, *'Bismillahi ar rahman—'* and I replied *'Ar rahim.'* 'In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate.' I had learned the phrase the semester before in my Comparative Religions class."

It sounded ridiculous, but he remembered that at that time both sides made mistakes like that.

"He told me to wait for him outside," she continued, "but he came out without seeming to notice me. He turned, and stumbled into me. All our books went flying. He helped me pick up my things, then walked off without another word. When I looked through my books, I saw an unfamiliar

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notebook. It was a strange way to lend notes, I decided, but who was I to complain?"

She walked to the window and peered out anxiously. Without returning to her seat, she went on, raising her voice so that he could hear it from where he was. "I had to be to work in an hour, so I hurried to the parking lot. I was almost to my car when I heard someone behind me call, 'Oh miss, could you help me please?' I turned around to see a man on his hands and knees next to an open car door. 'I lost a contact lens,' he said, 'and I can't see well enough to find it.' I should have recognized him from my geography class, but I didn't. I bent down to look for the lens, and he straightened up and threw me into the car. I tried to scream, but he slammed a hand over my mouth and opened his jacket to show me the gun he had tucked into his waistband.

" 'Get in the driver's seat,' he told me. I was terrified, but I obeyed. He got in next to me. He took the gun out of his waistband and shoved it into my side. 'Now drive,' he said, 'but if you do anything to attract attention, I'll kill you without another thought.'

"I cranked the engine and put the car in gear. 'Look, man,' I said, 'if it's money you want, I don't have much, but we can sell my books back to the bookstore if you want.' I was sure I was going to die.

"He dug the gun even harder into my side. 'That's enough,' he snapped, 'I want those papers.'

" 'I have some rolling papers in my purse,' I offered, thinking he must be stoned out of his mind, 'but I haven't been able to afford weed in a long time.'

"He slapped me, and ordered me to drive off-campus and take the road running west. I was amazed by the fact that no one seemed to notice that anything was wrong. The campus policeman waved us through the intersection without a second glance. There were very few cars once we got off-campus. He began rifling through my books with one hand, still holding the gun in the other. He took out the notebook Iyad had given me. 'What does this say?' he demanded.

"I looked over just long enough to see what he was talking about. 'Those are just some notes I borrowed from a guy in my geography class,' I told him. He squeezed my arm. 'You lie,' he said, tightening his grip until I winced. 'Why would he give you notes written in Arabic?'

"'I don't know,' I said, 'he was a really strange guy. Maybe

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"The glass shattered as bullets tore into the room. It was the first time I saw anyone die."

that's all he can write.'"

Distant explosions shook the room. A picture fell off the wall. "Oh God," she whispered, "there are two-hundred people in that village. I only hope they got out in time." The color drained from her face and she sat with her eyes closed till the bombing stopped. She crossed the room and touched his face with her hand. "You know what this means, don't you." It was not a question.

He nodded, but allowed no emotion to show on his face.

"You're a brave man," she said; "almost as brave as Iyad."

He looked directly into her sorrowful eyes. "My people give no medals because one man is as brave as another."

She smiled and sat back down. "I wasn't very brave that day. I was terrified. He made me drive about two more miles, looking over his shoulder the whole time. We finally stopped in front of a run-down house by the side of the road. He forced me inside, where he tied me to a chair. Over and over again he asked me about the papers, and over and over again I insisted that I did not know. After about half an hour, he gave up. He walked over to the telephone, dialed a number, and said into the mouthpiece, 'Is Harvey there?' He listened for a minute and said, 'What do you mean Harvey doesn't live there? He's been at that number for five years!' He slammed down the receiver and turned towards me. 'It won't be long now,' he said with a smile that sent shudders through my body. 'I have an expert coming.'

"He walked back across the room, past the window, and the glass shattered as bullets tore into the room. He was hit in several places and collapsed, spurting blood. It was the first time I saw anyone die.

"The door flew open and five men carrying machine guns burst in. Iyad was in front. He untied me. 'Is anyone coming?' he asked. I nodded, still in shock. 'Let's get out of here,' he said, and nodded to his men. I could barely stand, so he and one of the others half carried me outside while the others covered our backs. We all piled into the ice cream

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truck he had waiting in the bushes down the road. He asked me to sit up front with him and explained that the package I had received was meant for someone else. When he realized someone was tailing me, he followed close enough behind to see the ambush and follow us to the house, where he called for back-ups and weapons. He could make out our silhouettes through the blinds, and realized that the one standing up had to be the enemy. The first time he had a clear shot, he fired. Now he was faced with the problem of what to do with me. If I went to the police with my story, his cover would be blown and he would probably be turned over to the Mossad."

The explosions started again. "The bastards," she said bitterly. "There are infant children in that village, and old men who do nothing but study the Koran all day. For that they die."

Still he said nothing.

"Living in the United States, you never realize that these sorts of things happen," she said. "I was on the side of the Palestinians only because, as an anthropologist, I believed that the people who live in a land for two millenia have a right to keep it. But once I met Iyad and his friends, I realized exactly how terrible a thing it is to be a nationality deprived of a nation. I begged him to let me help.

"'It's not your fight,' he told me. 'Your own people are against us. Forget it.'

"It was quite a while before I convinced him I was sincere and even longer before I convinced him I could be trusted. Eventually he agreed. As I mentioned, there was heavy fighting in Lebanon at the time. A number of Palestinians who lived in the United States were going overseas to fight. Many still had relatives in the land that is called Israel, so they could not just catch the first plane for Beirut. They changed directions three or four times on the way to Europe, and made other arrangements from there."

He nodded. He had made many such arrangements in his career.

"The city in which I lived was a major stopover on one of the routes. One of Iyad's men would pick up the traveler at the airport and bring him to my apartment, where he would spend the night before flying out the next day. Most of them did not speak English and I was very slow to learn Arabic, so they eventually began to hold brief meetings at

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my house, knowing that I could not overhear anything important. None of them drank, of course, but I would pass around soft drinks and sometimes make a pot of soup. After they were finished, someone who spoke English would stay behind and help me with my homework. Besides Middle Eastern geography, I was also taking a course in international politics, and I was amazed by the knowledge these people had, not only about their own situation, but about politics all over the world. My professors occasionally looked askance at some of my interpretations, but they always had to admit that the facts were correct. I was paid a small salary for the use of my house, so I was able to quit my night job."

The explosions finally stopped. Iyad and the others, if they had survived, would be back soon. Everytime they left, she had to prepare herself for the possibility that they might not return.

"By the end of the next semester, the fighting had died down and Iyad's work was finished. He wanted to return here, but he needed an unimpeachable cover. I applied to the university to allow me to do my thesis on the ethnography of an Arab village. I listed Iyad as my interpreter and assistant. Arrangements were made with the government and the university here to assist me in any way possible. My research gives us the perfect cover: We can go wherever we want and speak to whomever we please without any suspicion being attached to our movements. Of course, as noncitizens, we aren't allowed out after dark."

She glanced toward the window again, but did not get up. "I do my work, and I take care of them. I bandage them when they're hurt and make sure they eat right. Sometimes I carry a message or two, but I cannot involve myself further without jeopardizing all of our covers and the lives of the Jewish professors here who have helped me with my research."

She did not tell him that she thought of herself as a sort of den mother. He was correct in guessing, however, that she was especially fond of Iyad, but had no way of knowing that this affection had only been expressed by cooking his meals and listening quietly to his plans, sometimes offering suggestions if he needed them. *If this ever ends,* she often thought, *maybe then he'll realize that I'm a woman, too.*

A peculiar pattern of knocks was heard from the door.

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"Thank God," she breathed; "they're home." She ran to the door and knocked twice quickly before opening it. If she hadn't, they would have known to open fire. She hugged each one quickly as he filed in. There were only five.

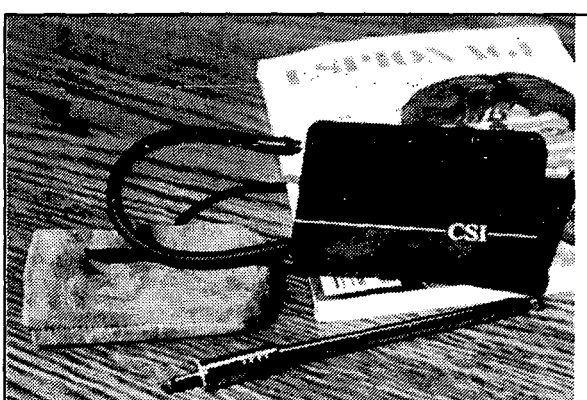
"Where's Abdel Jabbar?" she asked, dreading the answer.

Iyad shook his head. "We could only get half the village out the first time. We knew we didn't have time to go back, but Abdel's parents were still there, along with all of his cousins. He had to try."

Iyad walked over to the prisoner, who had been bound to the chair all evening. "We sent a message to the Mossad saying that we would release you if they spared that village. They said to tell you that you died a martyr."

The man's face still did not change.

She no longer shed tears for her own who were lost, but that night, she cried. ■



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Did you know...

A pair of smart, near-new boots brought about the downfall of a German spy in Britain during World War Two. Yet it was all a mistake.

Hitler had swept through most of Europe and Britain expected an invasion at any time. It was September 1940, and staff were immediately suspicious when two strangers arrived at the railway station at Buckpool, a little coastal village in the North of Scotland, and asked for tickets to London. Their trousers were wet to the knees, and they had missed the only train due to run that day.

A porter called the police, the two strangers were arrested, and they soon admitted they were German spies who had come ashore from a submarine. An immediate search was made along the shore and a pair of boots were found on the sand. But the captured spies were wearing shoes... the search for a possible third spy began.

At Edinburgh, about 100 miles to the south, the train from Buckpool had arrived before word reached the police. But there wasn't a train to London for three hours, and a search of the left-luggage office produced a suitcase with a white sea-water stain. Inside was a German-made radio transmitter.

So there *was* a third man, and he had reached Edinburgh...

A police team kept watch. Just before the London train was due to leave, a man claimed the suitcase. He was grabbed, there was a struggle—during which he first tried to use a Mauser automatic, then a knife—and at last he was overpowered. His name was Werner Walti. He had maps, forged papers, and other documents. Later, he and his two companions were tried in London, sentenced to death, and executed.

But just after Walti was arrested, an irate local fisherman came into Buckpool police station. He'd gone to dig bait on the shore and had taken off his new boots to wade in the mud. When he came back, he complained, someone had stolen his boots. In fact, his boots were the pair found by searching police. If he hadn't taken them off, then a German spy, complete with radio, might have reached London.

The fisherman wanted his boots back.

He got them.

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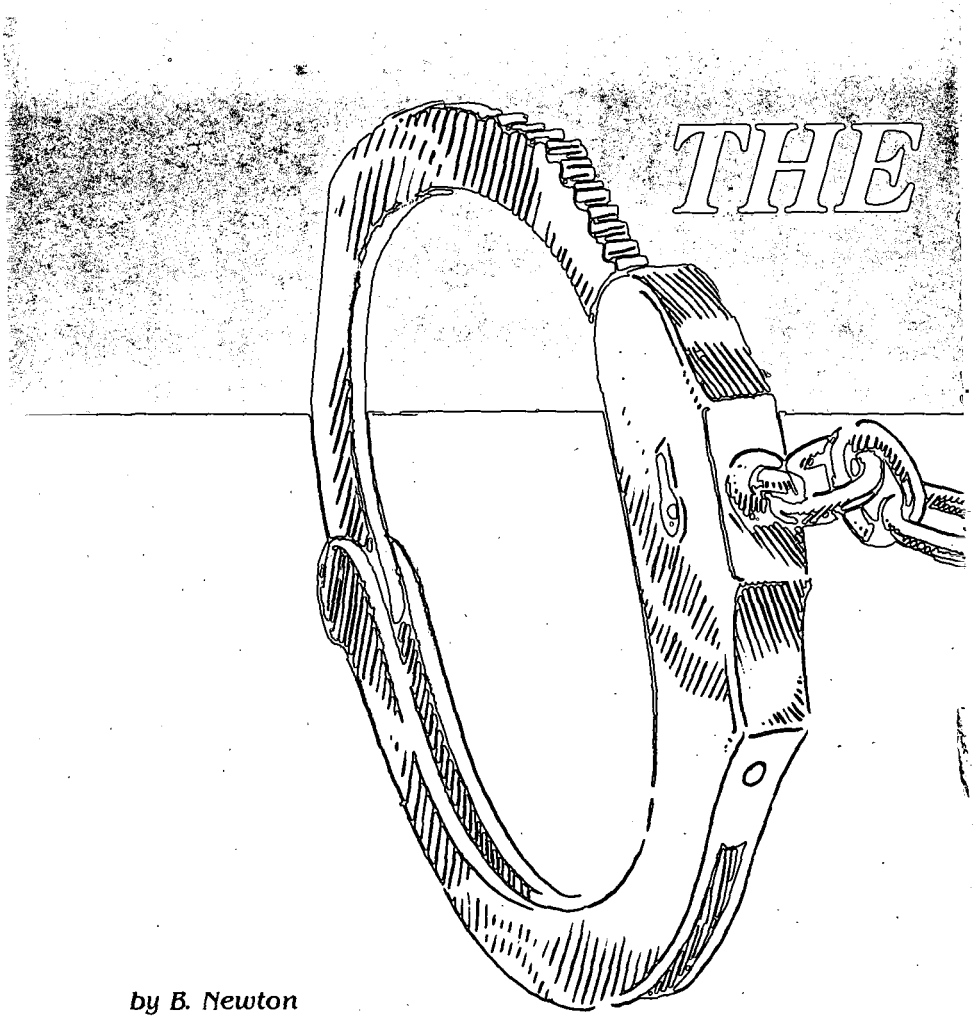

by B. Newton

He whipped the brown Pinto in and out of the evening traffic like a quick stitch. He flew around a public bus, heard the blaring of its horn, then swerved onto a sidestreet. It was a one-way.

A Trans-Am, coming at him like a missile, slammed on the horn, slammed on the brakes, then slammed over the curb and into a fire hydrant; losing the game of chicken.

"Jerk," he muttered.

He glanced at his watch. He had three minutes. He might be able to make it if he hurried. His foot went heavy on the accelerator. He dodged another oncoming

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Blue McPherson walked out of the corner quick-mart, whistling. He passed a lonely, paint-peeling telephone booth and leaned against a stoic blue mailbox, waiting at the crosswalk for the flashing red *Don't Walk* sign to give the okay. He tucked the brown paper bag he carried, packed with a quart of milk and a carton of Camels, under his arm.

The phone booth behind him let out a sharp ring.

He jumped a little and looked around. There wasn't anyone in sight. Traffic was a little heavy but there was no one on the sidewalks.

The phone rang again.

He wondered if someone was scheduled to be here and meet the call, or if it was just a mistakenly dialed number. He looked around again. He saw, half a block away, walking towards him, a small man in a gray, well-cut suit. His hair looked slicked back, his jaw clean-shaven. The setting sun seemed to glint off his glasses. But he walked slowly, hesitatingly, as if unsure whether to continue or not.

The phone rang a third time.

Blue McPherson shrugged, stepped into the phone booth, shifted his paper bag and answered. "White House," he said.

"Two, six—eight, Clandestine Avenue. Eight o'clock," said a woman's voice: it was soft and smooth, like a trickle of warm water down his spine. She hung up.

I should like to meet that voice, thought Blue McPherson. He replaced the receiver. *Sounded like a blonde,* he mused, stepping back outside. *Probably long-legged with firm round hips. A nice easy smile and a name like Candy, or Boom-boom or maybe—*

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A brown Pinto screeched against the curb and lurched to a halt. Blue McPherson jumped for the second time in less than five minutes. He shook his head. People were killed by drivers like that. He started across the street, the green *Walk* blinking permission. He heard the car door to the Pinto slam shut; a second later, he was grabbed by the shoulder and spun around.

"Did you answer that phone?"

Blue McPherson looked up into a hard, granite-chiseled face. Gray eyes, like narrowed fatal bullets, glared at him. The hand on his shoulder was thick and calloused, the fingers strong like pipes of steel. The man was tall, six-three at least. His chest swelled with muscles even as McPherson's shrunk with fright. The man's hair was a dark blond, cut short, showing a strong, slanted forehead. He was dressed in Levi jeans and a blue knit sweater. A silver bracelet clinked against his bear-thick wrist.

"I asked if you answered that phone?" He shook McPherson a little and McPherson felt the shake send a shiver through his entire body, ending with a quiver in his toes.

"Ah, ah, yeah, I guess I did. Kinda. There wasn't anyone around, see, and I thought—"

"What'd they say?"

"Well, now, I guess I don't remember, really." His mind spun, trying to remember what the girl had said. He figured the memory had been shaken out through his shoes along with the shiver. "It was a girl," he noted.

"I know it was a girl, dammit, but what'd she say!"

"Well, now, if you'll give me a minute, maybe—"

"I don't have a minute. What'd she tell you?"

The green *Walk* winked a final time and the *Don't Walk* took over, flashing its quiet warning. The traffic light turned green. Cars began to blare their horns at the two standing in the middle of the street. A couple of guys leaned out their windows and yelled, "Get outta the street, you jerks!" "Get movin'!" "Scram, queers!"

"Come on," said the guy. He yanked McPherson off the street and towards his car. He opened the passenger door—the Pinto seemed to groan—and pushed McPherson in. McPherson ducked his head, just missing knocking himself senseless on the car roof. The door was

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slammed shut behind him. Before he could adjust himself, shift his weight off the quart of milk and Camel cigarettes jammed under his leg, his captor squeezed into the driver seat beside him like a bear into a gopher hole.

"Okay, now," he said, his voice low and serious, "I'm gonna ask you nice one more time—" he reached under his seat and withdrew a .45 Magnum made small in his mammoth hand— "or, as my hero once said, 'I'm gonna blow your head cleeean off.' So, what'd the girl tell you?"

McPherson looked down the nozzle of the .45, hearing the question echo from within it. There was no question in his mind the man was serious. He found it difficult to believe but the man *would* shoot him without a moment's hesitation—he *would* die. His heart seemed to swell with unpumped blood, his bladder with unrelieved urine, and his throat with unswallowed saliva. His lips dried and began to crack in the seconds of his realizing his memory held his fate in its "hands." He swallowed. To his heart, he spoke, "easy, easy, easy." He closed his eyes, trying to relax, hoping that with the return of some composure, he would remember. He let his mind wander back over the past few minutes: He heard the phone ring again, saw the slick-haired little man, heard the girl's soft smooth voice again say—

It came to him like a remembered name at a high-school reunion. "Two, six—eight Clandestine Avenue. Eight o'clock." It tumbled in a rush from his parched lips. He opened his eyes. The deep black hole of the .45 still gaped at him.

"You sure?"

McPherson wet his lips. "Yes, 'Two, six—eight Clandestine Avenue. Eight o'clock.' That's what she said. I remember now."

"Eight o'clock?"

McPherson nodded.

The guy glanced at the digital clock stuck to his dashboard. Its red-ember numbers showed 7:35. "That only gives me twenty-five minutes." His tone was level, expressing a fact he was ready to face. He looked back at McPherson and smiled. "You're coming with me. And if you lied," he pointed the .45 at McPherson's head, "cleeean off. Got it?"

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McPherson nodded, his eyes riveted to the gun.

"Good." He placed the .45 between them, in easy reach, started the Pinto and bucked away from the curb.

As they sped through the downtown traffic, like a salmon for the open sea, Blue McPherson's mind was simultaneously numb and excited. He considered reaching for the gun but quickly shook off the thought as foolish. The important thing now, he told himself, was to remain calm and cool-headed. He breathed slowly through his mouth and repressed an urge to grab his abductor by the collar and scream, "What in the hell is going on!"

He found it difficult to believe this was happening. He argued, it wouldn't be so bad if he knew exactly what *this* was. Not knowing was what was gnawing on his nerves like a parasite. It was not fear, he contended; it was uncertainty, the total lack of control in being yanked off the street, thrust in a car and threatened with a .45. This didn't just happen every day! he told himself.

"Let me see your wallet," said the driver, holding out his paw.

McPherson struggled with the bag of milk and cigarettes while he dug out his wallet. Normally, he would have questioned any such demand, even if it were made by the superintendent of the high school where he taught history; but, instead, he handed it over without a word. He considered the .45 on the seat beside him might have something to do with his compliancy.

The guy flipped open McPherson's wallet and glanced at his driver's license. He looked over at Blue. "Francis Quenton McPherson?"

Blue shrugged. "My mother was Irish, my father wasn't. My mother named me."

"What'd you do to make her hate you?"

Blue sighed. He had heard it all before, and somehow the ribbing about his name helped calm him. "My friends call be Blue."

The guy grunted in answer, concentrating on a sharp right turn. Then he returned to the wallet. He mumbled, "Social Security card, Mastercard, library card, Red

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Cross donor card, lottery ticket—you play the lottery?"

"Occasionally. I haven't won, yet, though." McPherson could feel the tension in the car easing. He began to relax more and more. Whatever *was* going on appeared to be drifting away from involving him directly in the action—and, thank God, the consequences. The conversation seemed to be carrying it away in a tide of conviviality. He was more than grateful.

"I play once in a while myself. I haven't won yet either." He returned to the wallet. "Picture of mother and father, girlfriend, daughter?"

McPherson shook his head. "Baby sister, Katie."

"A gunshot echoed from the house, splitting the silence. The front door slammed open and across the porch, leaping and hitting the ground running, came a woman."

"Cute kid." He flipped the wallet shut. "I'm impressed. You've got everything. When they said you were good, I didn't know they meant *this* good," he waved the wallet.

"What do you mean?" asked McPherson, his sense of relaxation tensing.

"Just that I know who you are. I'll keep this." He shoved the wallet into his back pocket, continued steering with his left hand, and looked over at McPherson, an eyebrow raised.

"You know who I am?" McPherson was stunned. All sense of relaxation was gone—more than likely stuffed into a hip pocket like his wallet. His hands tightened into fists, palms wet and sticky. "I don't know what you mean," he said.

"Oh, come on. You can cut the act. I know you're the *Tradesman*. I'm Agent Collins of NSA and I was debriefed on you. We knew you'd be in on this one. I guess we just got lucky."

"The *Tradesman*? CIA?"

"Please . . ." said Agent Collins, "I'm with the National

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Security Agency. This was too important for the CIA to bungle."

McPherson's mind swirled, blanked, then swirled again. "Look," he said, his voice high and halting, "I am not this Tradesman guy you're talking about. Really, I'm not." He tried to laugh, then caught himself, convinced it sounded more like a whimper.

"Right. Then how did you know the code word for the phone call?"

"What code word? I just answered the phone. For a lark."

"And you answered it 'White House,' right? Just for the hell of it?"

"Right. It was all just a joke, see? It came off the top of my head. Just like that; I mean, coincidences do happen, you know. I think—"

"Forget it, McPherson. Or should I say, Tradesman? I don't want to hear it. Besides, we're here." Agent Collins pulled the Pinto up tight to the curb and parked.

268 Clandestine Avenue was set a ways back from the road. In the deepening dusk, shadows hid it well. Strangely, it seemed to be waiting, tucked and quieted away; yet, open and challenging.

"You're staying here," said Agent Collins. He squeezed the .45 into his waistline. From the glove compartment, he withdrew a pair of handcuffs. He snapped one around McPherson's left wrist, the other to the steering wheel.

"I don't think this is necessary," said McPherson.

"I do." Agent Collins got out of the car, shut the door, and made for the house up its side driveway. McPherson watched but then leaned his head back, closed his eyes, and tried to breathe slowly. *It'll be all right,* he told himself; *it'll be all right—I hope.*

A bright glare of headlights approaching from the rear caused McPherson to open his eyes. The lights became brighter, then blinked out like candlelight under a snuffer. Through the rearview mirror, he glimpsed the shadowed shape of a parked car. He heard the car's engine hum for a while before being shut off, then the car door opened, a man stepped out, and the car door shut. The man began to walk up the side drive. His walk was slow, cautious and alert.

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McPherson watched his shadowed form and felt a twinge of dread—and a nagging sense of recognition. Where had he seen this guy before? He was sure he had. It was something more than his glasses that seemed to absorb shadows, it was more the way he walked, his short stature. Maybe just his very presence. But, whatever it was, McPherson drew a blank.

Instead of approaching the front door as Agent Collins had done, the man continued up the driveway and around the house. Except for the car parked behind the Pinto, it was as if he had never come along.

A gunshot echoed from the house, splitting the silence. McPherson bolted upright, the handcuffs tugging at his arm. He heard shouts coming from the house. The front door slammed open and across the porch, leaping and hitting the ground running, came a woman, her purse flapping behind her. She sprinted for the Pinto.

McPherson watched her—too puzzled to think, too helpless to act.

She threw open McPherson's door. "Scoot over," she said, her breath coming hard. "I said move." From her coat she drew a gun, waved it once.

Once was all it took. McPherson scooted. A stray thought pondered the fact that weapons seemed to evoke a quick response—at least from him—but he sat behind the steering wheel like a trained seal and waited for his next command.

It came as she tossed him a set of keys. "Drive," she said.

He fumbled with the keys, finally found the right one, and ignited the Pinto into life. "Where to?" he asked.

"Just drive. Now." The gun jabbed him in the ribs.

"Right." McPherson pulled away from the curb.

After ten minutes of random driving, going nowhere with right turns here and left turns there, McPherson's thoughts were as lost as his body. He had stopped trying to figure things out. He was going with the flow, or rather, in the direction the gun pointed.

"Your apartment," she said.

"What?" he looked at her. He had not had an opportunity to do so before and he raised an eyebrow. He had not imagined a voice so curt, so hard could come from

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a face so attractive: dark hair, full and soft, a sharp, small nose and a nice smooth chin, her eyes hidden in shadows.

"I said 'your apartment.' Drive to your apartment."

"My apartment?" Now that was a little too personal. "Let's hold on a minute. What's this all about, anyway? Where's Agent Collins?"

"Agent Collins? Oh, him. Dead, I hope."

"Dead?" McPherson started to brake. The gun in his ribs lifted his foot and dropped it back on the accelerator. "Dead? Look, I have nothing to do with this. All I did was answer a damn phone call. That's all."

"You answered the phone?"

McPherson hesitated. Then "Yeah. Just for fun, though. Really. I've never made a bigger mistake in all my life."

"You spoke to my twin sister. She just left for Brazil. How much further to your apartment?"

McPherson shrugged. "I don't know. I'm lost. I'm just driving around hoping to find a street I recognize." He waited a tense moment for her to explode into anger but she only sighed. "Listen," McPherson ventured, "can you tell me what this is all about?"

"No."

They drove on in silence.

McPherson finally came to a familiar street and headed south towards his apartment. He began to feel more and more in control of himself, more at ease—if one can ever be at ease with a gun at one's side.

"Do you work for the Tradesman?" she asked, attempting to catch McPherson off stride.

But he had nothing to hide. "No. I don't even know who in the hell this Tradesman guy is. I told you, I just answered the phone. I'm nothing. Not CIA, not FBI, not NSA, not KGB—nothing. I'm just a history teacher. . .and some even question that."

"Like me. How much further?"

"Just ahead."

They pulled into McPherson's apartment parking complex. He circled the car around to his parking space. "Look," he said, "if I can prove my name is Blue McPherson, will you believe me and tell me what in hell is going on?"

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"I'd think about it."

"Great. Look at my name above the parking space." *McPHERSON* in fading black letters designated the parking space into which he eased the Pinto. He shut the motor off. "Well?"

"Where's your car?"

"Downtown, where I left it after being so rudely mugged."

"I'll think about it," she said. "Come on." She got out of the car, the gun still leveled at him.

"Ah, excuse me," said McPherson, feeling sarcasm swell within him and feeling good about it, "I'm not going anywhere. I'm handcuffed to the steering wheel, compliments of agent Collins."

"Damn," she breathed. "Where's the key?"

"If I knew, do you think I'd still be handcuffed?"

"Check the keyring. Maybe it's one of those." She looked around the parking structure. "Hurry up."

McPherson went through the several keys on the ring and soon found the handcuff key. "How'd you get these, anyway?" he asked, unlocking his wrist.

"He dropped them when I shot him. Come on."

McPherson moved, sarcasm taking a back seat to the woman with the hot gun.

McPherson's apartment was small. The kitchen was clean; the living room, with a typewriter on the coffeetable, was littered with crumbled papers, and stacks of books towered around the room.

"Sit over there," she waved toward the couch. McPherson went and sat. She examined the typewriter, the mug of cold coffee next to it, the papers, the books. "Writing a book?" she asked.

"Yes. Concerning the effect of the Catholic Church on the political development of ancient Rome. You see, the idea is—"

"Fascinating." She sat down across from him. "Look, I need your help."

"As long as you got the gun, you got my help," said McPherson.

"Good." She let the sarcasm pass. "I'm going to stay the night here, and then early tomorrow morning you'll take me to Taasum Airport."

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"That's eighty miles from here!"

"Precisely. They'll have every airport around here watched, but Taasum should be pretty safe."

"May I ask who *they* are?"

"No. It's better if you don't know."

"Well, I'll tell you, Sister, I'm tired of not knowing. First I'm kidnapped, handcuffed, threatened with guns and Clint Eastwood maniacs and then I'm taken to *my* apartment and commanded to drive some woman with a gun eighty miles to an airport. Dammit! I think it's time I was told what in God's name is going on." McPherson sat back, exhausted, and then his mind began to fill with the realization of how foolish he had been. He should have had more control. He had blown it now, he told himself. Any second now the gun would go pop!

"And if I tell you nothing?" her voice was icicle cold.

McPherson swallowed. "Well, I, ah,"—but he held his ground, however shaky—"I, ah, won't take you anywhere, then." He nodded his head as if saying 'so there!'

She stood up and began to pace, tapping the gun against her open palm. After a moment, she stopped; looking at the wall, she said, "I'll kill you if you don't."

That's what I was afraid of, thought McPherson. He forced himself to stop wringing his hands and to keep a cool head. "You could," he said. "But it'd be very foolish. You don't have a silencer, everyone in the building would hear the shot. Someone would call the police. You'd never make it to Taasum Airport. Or any other airport for that matter."

"I could."

"No. You couldn't." He was hardly as confident as he sounded, or as he wanted to sound.

She tapped the gun twice more then whirled from the wall to McPherson. "Okay," she said, "what do you want to know?"

McPherson found he had been holding his breath; he exhaled slowly. He had the strange sense of having just bought more time with all the coin he had, counterfeit though it was.

"First, tell me who this Tradesman guy is. And then what it is exactly everyone wants. You can throw in there, too, why you want to get to the airport."

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She nodded as if they were logical, sensible questions, questions she would have asked herself. She sat down. "The Tradesman is a man who deals in information. He buys and trades but usually steals internationally valuable information. He then resells the info to the highest bidder. My sister and I worked for him in the area of acquiring information—getting it anyway we could, if you know what I mean." She smiled curtly. "So that's the Tradesman.

"What everyone wants is this." She reached into her purse, taking out a small black container. She laid it on her open palm. "Microfilm, the last remaining copy, detailing a newly developed hybrid grain which can

"His silencer made a whistling noise and she fell to the floor with a soft whimper. Her tense body relaxed. Her hair fell loosely across her shocked face."

grow in adverse weather conditions—extreme heat, extreme cold, monsoons, droughts—pretty much anything. So they say."

"So they say," said McPherson, the skeptic.

"Anyway, my sister stole it from a scientist in Southern Cal, then blew all the records. She's on her way to Brazil, I think I told you. I stole the film from the Tradesman's control headquarters and was trying to get the U.S. to up their bid for its return. That's who was supposed to answer the phone; not you."

McPherson shrugged. "Sorry. I kinda wish I hadn't, myself."

"I was hoping the U.S. would go higher, once they learned Iran had offered ten, but—"

"Thousand?"

She looked at him. "Million," she said, a scholar to a lacking pupil, and shook her head.

"Iran will pay ten million?" McPherson thought it cliched to cough but couldn't help it.

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"Yes." She ignored the coughing as childish. "The Soviet Union would pay more if we could convince them of the grain's legitimacy. Unfortunately, we can't. Iran's representative is to meet us in Brazil day after tomorrow. This was the U.S.'s last shot." She paused, looked at her watch. "What else?"

She had nonplussed McPherson. He rubbed his forehead. "This is incredible," he said, more to himself than to her. "Seems right out of a book."

"Does it? This gun proves it's not. This microfilm proves it's not." She squeezed a hand around each.

"Oh, I know," said McPherson; "I know. Believe me, I know. This is all too real." He stood up. She waved the gun and he sat down again. "You're to meet your sister in Brazil tomorrow night?"

"Yes. I have my ticket already."

It had all come too fast. McPherson needed time to sort it out. He decided, in a moment of pause, to sleep on it. "All right," he said. "I guess I'm satisfied."

"Good. I'm going to have to put the handcuffs back on you."

"Handcuffs! I can't sleep with handcuffs on."

"Why not? You drove."

"Well, yeah, but—"

The door exploded open.

Pivoting, she whipped the gun to a firing position, while in the same instant dropping the microfilm. McPherson watched it fall.

Agent Collins stepped into the room and fired. His silencer made a whistling noise and she fell to the floor with a soft whimper. Her tense body relaxed. Her hair fell loosely across her shocked face.

McPherson ceased breathing; his heart beat wildly against its cage.

"Where's the microfilm?" asked Collins.

McPherson shook his head and tried to speak. Nothing came out. Mouth and mind refused to work together, though, finally, he found the words: "I don't know," and shrugged.

"Listen, you jerk, don't fuck with me. You see what happens." He waved towards the woman's body. "Now I ain't got the time to mess around." His big paw of a hand grabbed McPherson by the collar and pulled him

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close to his granite-hard face. "Where's the microfilm?" he asked, low and with a growl.

"Really, honest-to-God, I don't know. She wanted me to take her to the airport."

For a moment, the two looked at each other: McPherson's eyes wide and watery, Collins' narrow and frozen. The agent scoffed and threw McPherson back down on the couch. He reached into his jeans.

"You forgot I had this, punk." He threw McPherson his wallet. "Wasn't difficult finding you. Where's her purse?"

McPherson pointed it out on the floor.

Collins bent and shuffled through it. Nothing. He threw it against the wall. Then he went over her, as rough and as harsh as he had the purse. Again, nothing. His face was turning a deep salmon pink. He searched the floor, shuffled through papers, kicked aside books; all the while growling louder and louder.

"I want that microfilm!" He froze and snapped his fingers. "Maybe she left it in the car?" McPherson nodded, then shrugged. "Come on, let's go check." Collins hauled him off the couch again. McPherson bumped into his shoulder and he winced. "The bitch winged me back at the house. I was out only a second but that was all she needed. Never trust a woman, let me tell you." They started for the door.

"Hold it, Tradesman!" A short man in a grey suit, with his hair slicked back and glasses magnifying intense blue eyes, stood in the doorway with an automatic leveled at the two of them.

Collins threw McPherson into the grey-suited man, knocking him over, before twisting and lunging through the doorway and down the hall. McPherson untangled himself from the familiar, recognizable man, saying "Sorry, Oops, Sorry," all the while.

The man got to his feet. "CIA," he said, flipping his badge for a wink of a look. "Where's the microfilm?"

"He has it," McPherson said, trying to catch his breath. He pointed down the hall.

"Thanks." And the CIA man in the grey suit took off down the hall after Collins and the microfilm.

McPherson waited a couple of minutes, on the floor against the wall, to see if either man would return soon. Neither did. Shaken, and with an effort, McPherson

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stood and walked to the body of the woman. He shook his head, bent and moved the hair from across her face, and studied it. He wanted to imprint the face in his memory—the chin, nose and eyes—so as to recognize her sister.

When he was satisfied, he gathered the papers comprising his book and shoved them into his briefcase. He took a couple of books. For a moment, he wondered about his typewriter—then he laughed: He would buy a new one. He picked up the keys to the Pinto, retrieved her purse, and took the airplane ticket.

He withdrew the microfilm from the cold mug of coffee—hoping the container was water-tight—pocketed it, and headed out the door to begin his journey to Brazil. If he was lucky, the CIA man in the grey suit would catch the NSA man and he would meet the woman's twin sister—whose voice and body he was anxious to hear and touch—and the Iranian representative. ■

The **Little Brothers of the Poor-Friends of the Elderly** is a national non-profit organization which establishes itself in local communities to extend friendship and personalized service to lonely and isolated elderly people. By visiting, socializing and offering programs which promote independent living, they strive to meet the emotional as well as the physical needs of our elderly friends.

"Flowers before bread" is their motto — their belief is that all human beings, especially elderly people, should be treated with respect. They believe that the elderly are entitled to some of the "luxuries" of life even if they cannot afford them themselves. To that end, they provide some expensive items in their food packages: fresh flowers for a birthday or on the table at a party, a glass of champagne at Christmas, and good dinners rather than a soup line when they receive their guests.

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RESULTS OF THE FIRST ANNUAL ESPIONAGE SHORT-STORY CONTEST!

We deeply regret having to make this announcement, but here it is: after careful consideration of the manuscripts submitted to our first annual short-story contest, we've decided to give out no awards.

That's right, none. No first place, no second place, no third place. No awards.

Ridiculous, you say. What's a contest without winners?

We couldn't agree with you more. But the sad fact is, we didn't think *any* of the entries were good enough to publish in our magazine — and if they're not good enough to publish, we're not going to give them space which ought to be used for worthier fiction.

What was wrong with the stories our entrants submitted? The biggest problem was that *more than half* of the students who participated paid little or no attention to the contest rules. Fully a *third* of the submissions had nothing at all to do with spies or spying, and ought never to have been sent to us in the first place. Others were too long, or were single-spaced, or didn't indicate what colleges or universities their authors attended.

Of the entries which *did* abide by the rules, almost all were tritely-plotted and poorly-written, rife with cliches, atrocious spelling and grade-school grammar.

Frankly, we're disappointed. We'd hoped for a better showing, a *much* better showing. But we have no intention of giving up! We're anxious to showcase young talent, so we're going to try it again.

The rules for this year's contest are on the facing page. If you're interested in entering — and we hope you will be! — please read them *carefully*, and please be sure to follow them. Send us a *spy* story, no longer than 4000 words, typed and double-spaced. Make sure you mention the name of the school you attend on the first page of your manuscript. Read our magazine to familiarize yourself with the type of story we like. Show your work to your writing teachers — if you have them — *before* you send it in, and pay attention to the comments they make.

We promised you three winners from last year's contest, and we feel awful about going back on our word. We'd be setting a terrible standard, though, if we gave prizes to stories which don't deserve them. That's how come we've made the painful decision to announce no award for 1985.

But we have the highest of hopes for 1986!

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The editors of ***Espionage Magazine*** *are pleased to announce their*

Second Annual SHORT-STORY CONTEST

for full-time and part-time students at American Colleges and Universities.

1st Prize:
$200 and publication in *Espionage*

2nd Prize:
$100 and publication in *Espionage*

3rd Prize:
$50 and publication in *Espionage*

Rules:

1. All entrants must be currently enrolled as full- or part-time students at an American college or university in the U.S. or abroad.
2. All entries must be original and previously unpublished, and must deal with the world of national or international espionage. (Students are advised to familiarize themselves with the magazine before writing a story for this contest. Single issues are available at many newsstands, or a one-year subscription may be ordered for a special student rate of $12.00 from *Espionage*, P.O. Box # 1184, Teaneck, N.J. 07666. Include the name of your college or university on your order.)
3. Submissions must be typed and double-spaced, and may not exceed a length of 4,000 words. The entrant's full name and mailing address *must* appear on the first page of the manuscript, along with the name of the college or university the entrant attends.
4. Submissions should be addressed to *Espionage Contest*, P.O. Box # 1184, Teaneck, NJ 07666, and must be postmarked no later than December 31, 1986 to receive consideration.
5. Winners will be notified by mail on or before June 1, 1987. The winning stories will be published during 1987. All rights to winning stories will be the property of the publisher.
6. Submissions will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

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Vladimir

An author *(High Treason)* with a PhD, Vladimir Sakharov is currently visiting Professor of Political Science at the University of Arizona. A former visiting scholar in International Relations at Stanford University, Sakharov was reared the son of a Soviet diplomat, becoming—until his defection in 1971—a top Soviet agent, working for both the KGB and the GRU (the military arm of Soviet intelligence). Then he went to work for the CIA.

But Vladimir Sakharov came to the United States without cloak and dagger. In contrast to the bullets and bombs universe of Robert Ludlum, Sakharov made his way in the secret world via linguistic ability and public relations. A large, laughing bear of a man, Sakharov says espionage has a lot more to do with bureaucracy than bombs, and the most important thing in his life during those years of intrigue was always his family, a family he had to leave behind to make the leap to the West.

". . . the strength of the Soviets and the strength of their intelligence efforts actually is in an ability to directly communicate Soviet ideals, alleged or real, to the rest of the world in their local language."

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Sakharov
KGB, GRU, CIA

Interview conducted for ESPIONAGE Magazine by Skip Press

ESPIONAGE: What was the deciding factor in your defection? What made you finally decide to do it?

SAKHAROV: Personal considerations, primarily. Overexposure to Western civilization. American culture, American books. The grass was greener on this side always, and it kinda . . . the whole American experience in my Russian life kind of stood maybe different from the rest of the people. Very early in my life I was fascinated by things American. I think *that* above anything else.

ESPIONAGE: Were you married when you defected?

SAKHAROV: I was married. I was married about seven years. I have a daughter there. She's doing quite well.

ESPIONAGE: Any idea what happened to them?

SAKHAROV: I know what happened—nothing extraordinary or outrageous happened. They live their own lives and they still retain everything they had before. You know, the conveniences, the house, the car. They weren't subject to prosecution, which is kind of . . . I'm happy about.

ESPIONAGE: Is that rare?

SAKHAROV: I think it depends on the individual. My father knew a lot of the (top) people and he was able to handle it quite well after I defected. He was left behind to take care of the family. In some other cases, when there is no father, or some relative for the family, you might see some problems, like in Yurichenko's case.

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ESPIONAGE: And your father was already a diplomat?

SAKHAROV: Yes, he was nearing retirement age. His career was pretty much accomplished. There was no reason for them to prosecute him. He was always loyal worker.

ESPIONAGE: Okay. When you're an agent, whether for the CIA or the KGB, do you worry about your life? You know, the James Bond type stuff—die at any moment.

SAKHAROV: I don't know. In my case it was so limited—I'll put it that way. First I was diplomat, then I was an intelligence officer. As far as my association with CIA, it was more a matter of compromise to come to this country. I didn't know how, and the CIA was there to help, so to say! It was not your cloak-and-dagger type of experience. It was a routine bureaucratic meeting, and trying to find right timing for the CIA to remove me. It was fairly usual, regular business, very civilized. From the outside looking in, it was rather boring, probably.

ESPIONAGE: Interesting. What's the toughest thing about doing your duties as an agent?

SAKHAROV: The toughest thing is trying to reconcile your care for family and, in my case, I just always wanted to be left alone, lead a simple life. Plus I was a jazz musician. . .

ESPIONAGE: Really? What do you play?

SAKHAROV: Piano. I never really fit in that kind of system. So I suppose the toughest thing was for me as a free-wheeling individual to try and fit into that system; you know, that very manipulative system, and at same time try to care for the family. It wasn't possible.

ESPIONAGE: What's the biggest thrill in being an agent? Is there one?

SAKHAROV: There's not. There was not for me. It was just to be able to come to this place, to fulfill my dream.

ESPIONAGE: Really? So you got in the GRU and the KGB to actually get here?

SAKHAROV: Well, no, not. . .I didn't get into GRU or KGB to come here. The reason I was recruited by the KGB was because I spoke perfect Arabic. I was assigned to the Middle East at the time and KGB needed some Arabic specialists, so they said *now you're working for us.* You can't say *no.* So that's how I ended up working for them. Working for the CIA was only a means to come here. I felt just to defect was not the right choice. You had to prove yourself.

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ESPIONAGE: How was it that you spoke Arabic? Did you just decide to study that?

SAKHAROV: No, I didn't decide to study Arabic. I was admitted to Institute of International Relations and the assignment given to me was six years of Arabic. So that's what I did.

ESPIONAGE: As a KGB agent, how many languages do you have to speak when you go into a country? Do you have to learn the language?

SAKHAROV: You must learn. As far as the Soviets are concerned, you must have a fluency in the language of the country where you are being sent to, whether it's Nigeria or China or Viet Nam or Middle East.

ESPIONAGE: Countries where there are fairly Anglo, Caucasian people, do they work on your accent, try to remove your Russian accent?

SAKHAROV: Oh, no! Not at all. The only time accent removal work, to my knowledge—of course, I don't know everything—but to my knowledge, the only time heavy accent removal work is done is with government interpreters, like the translator for Gorbachev. That's so it sounds right, very sophisticated, much more pleasing to any foreigner's ear.

ESPIONAGE: What's the toughest thing to get used to in the different cultures of the U.S. and the U.S.S.R.?

SAKHAROV: For me it was American noncommital manner of speech, so to say. Americans are used to it, but Americans have this tendency to, say, invite you over sometime, to say "Let's go to dinner sometime," "I'll help you with the job," "I'll do this for you." In other words, they're. . .they don't really mean anything. In Russia, you can't do that. If you invite someone to dinner, you better invite them. If you say you help, you gonna help. In other words, a person's word is his bond in Russia, which is a sort of honor bond. If you say something, you better mean it. And it's also traditionally explainable. . .because you never know what relatives a person will have, whether KGB or authority or something like that. So when you promise something, you better deliver. . .or you might get into trouble. Here, no one cares about nobody, in a sense. That's what I find. So the words are empty and nothing really matters as far as commitments are concerned. I find I do it myself now. Sometimes, you don't want to see somebody, so you

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invite him, "Why don't you come over some time?" hoping that the person will go away!

ESPIONAGE: How does the average GRU or KGB agent compare to the CIA?

SAKHAROV: As far as which is which—I worked with CIA officers when I was in Middle East, who were top-notch, you know. Perfect experts, outgoing, very erudite, marvelous people. And I knew some GRU experts who were not up to par in certain capacities. But on average, the major distinction I make between GRU, KGB and CIA experts is that, generally, Soviet intelligence officers are more knowledgeable about the area they're assigned. Americans are much less knowledgeable.

ESPIONAGE: Why do you think that is? Because they're more studious, because your schooling system is more rigorous?

SAKHAROV: No, not necessarily that. There is a system in America not to assign a person to the same country all the time. You have to transfer all the time, because there is a belief here that a person might be biased if he's in one area all the time. So they reassign them Soviets don't do that. They usually stick to one area as far as assignments go.

ESPIONAGE: For life?

SAKHAROV: For life. Once in a while, a person will get a transfer, someone who's had several tours of duty, say 12 years in one place. He might have to stay in Cambodia or something. Then he might get an assignment for once, just once, to the United States, or Belgium or France. That means a person *went shopping.* Then he will go back.

ESPIONAGE: What's the toughest thing to overcome as a Russian operating in the Western World? When you're an agent.

SAKHAROV: I suppose the toughest thing to overcome would be feelings of temptations provided by Western world, on an individual basis. It's a corrupting influence. I believe this is crucial.

ESPIONAGE: Is it money? Sex? Drugs?

SAKHAROV: No, money is not important to Russians, because money is a dirty word in Russia. Money is always available to Russians. Actually, I might say that Russians are the least money-conscious people, because money is there, it's in abundance, and they're not that poor. It's just that there are no items to spend it on; that's their problem. I feel it's

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not the corrupting influence of money but corrupting influence of multitude of goods. You know, go to K-Mart or Sears. Bullocks! You see dazzling array of things that are not available in the Soviet Union, and in Socialist countries as well. And of course, temptations of sex are very strong. Drugs are irrelevant, because drugs have never been popular in the Soviet Union. But temptations such as sex, pornography, are quite strong.

ESPIONAGE: We know there's a large alcohol problem in the Soviet Union. Is that ever a problem with an agent?

SAKHAROV: Oh yeah. For the first time, under Gorbachev, the Soviets have started to acknowledge it, themselves. There's an ongoing debate involved, on the problems of alcoholism and trying to solve it, one way or the other. There is no solution, in my belief, because it's a part of the Soviet character. It's the tradition to go drinking. It's a way of life, to drink. And socially. The same story goes for intelligence. I've known some heavy, heavy drinking alcoholic types in the KGB who function, very limitedly, and they basically always center their lifestyle around drinking, just to drive on through the day and get blasted at night. I've seen a lot of them do this. So we're not dealing with tough old Soviet agents here.

ESPIONAGE: As an agent, did you ever personally kill anyone?

SAKHAROV: No, no. My affairs were limited to economic studies, to liaison with counter-intelligence, police, immigration, naturalization. A lot of my time was spent working with media intimately.

ESPIONAGE: You were a public relations person?

SAKHAROV: I was, in a sense. I delivered lectures in Arabic to Alexandria shipyard workers as one of my duties, on Soviet-Arab friendship and on Soviet-Arab support in the fight against Israel. Soviet military superiority and "help to our brothers;" things like that. Just to sort of present a, you know, marvelous picture of Soviet help. The Soviets have a lecture series on this, of the same character, which is delivered by Soviet military personnel, by Soviet embassy employees, Soviet officials. . .

ESPIONAGE: Do you feel that in the Soviet effort to propagate their philosophy in the world a lot more is done through that sort of thing than the common Westerner knows about?

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SAKHAROV: Oh, yes. That's part of it. One hears a lot about disinformation, misinformation, things like that, but the strength of the Soviets and the strength of their intelligence efforts actually is in an ability to directly communicate Soviet ideals, alleged or real, to the rest of the world in their local language.

ESPIONAGE: By doing it in their local language, do you think they're fairly successful?

SAKHAROV: Yeah. Extremely so. Better than anybody else.

ESPIONAGE: Really? Better than any CIA efforts?

SAKHAROV: They [CIA] have no language capabilities. Can you imagine a CIA officer standing on the podium in, let's say in Algeria, and delivering a lecture to employers, to workers of a plant somewhere in Algeria, in an Arabic language? No, that's not going to happen.

ESPIONAGE: When you are an agent for either the CIA or the KGB, what's on your mind the most?

SAKHAROV: Family. Not much else. That was on my mind, so I'm speaking from my experience.

ESPIONAGE: The welfare of your family?

SAKHAROV: The welfare of my family. Sure.

ESPIONAGE: So when you left, it must have been a really tough decision?

SAKHAROV: That was very, very difficult.

ESPIONAGE: Have you remarried here?

SAKHAROV: I married a California girl, from Southern California. We just had our ten years anniversary. We have a 9-year old boy. I became sort of an American suburbia type, you know. Little house, little fence, coaching soccer. (Laughs)

ESPIONAGE: Amazing! What are you personally most interested in working for now? There's a lot of emphasis on explaining what really is going on in the KGB and intelligence; the battles. What are you working for?

SAKHAROV: I've been pushing for the last six years. . . ever since Reagan administration came to power, I've been pushing for cultural exchange between Russia and the United States. It finally is coming to bear results. That's basically it. That plus sort of doing PR for studying languages on American university campuses. Those are two major things I tried to do, sort of as a public service. But for me, personally, I'm going to eventually end up working somewhere in USIA (United States Information Agency), if they

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will ever get over their grudges against me.

ESPIONAGE: Because of all you did on the other side?

SAKHAROV: No, because I rocked the boat with the CIA so badly several years ago that I became sort of persona non grata with the CIA. I rebelled over their resettlement program, their defector resettlement program. I went to *60 Minutes,* and I did a BBC program, and I just stood up—that kind of stuff. *

ESPIONAGE: You spent a year in debriefing. Doing what? What could you possibly cover in a year?

SAKHAROV: Just everything you know. Every little detail you know is extracted from you. Everything.

ESPIONAGE: What do you think is the most important struggle between the Russian and U.S. governments today?

SAKHAROV: Struggle of rhetoric. And that is going to go on for a long, long time. And the struggle in Third World countries. Not necessarily a military confrontation; it's a struggle of words and struggles through words.

ESPIONAGE: Honestly, who do you think is winning?

SAKHAROV: Neither. The Third World is winning, from my standpoint, because the Third World has begun now to be disillusioned, both with the Soviet side and the Americans. There is a trend toward nationalism. And, finally, the Third World realizes now they are something to be fought over by the superpowers.

ESPIONAGE: So they can manipulate them?

SAKHAROV: They can manipulate them.

ESPIONAGE: What do you think the future of espionage is? It seems like it's really kind of becoming a spy world, you know?

SAKHAROV: The future is computerization. We are living now in the era that a Soviet KGB officer knowledgeable enough is able to tap into almost any computer system here and get whatever information, personal or otherwise, on

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*Though not commonly known, many defected Soviet agents, once their debriefings are done, have been left to fend for themselves. Or as Sakharov put it: "They suck out your brains and dump you on Hollywood Boulevard." Protesting such treatment after his 1971 defection and year-long debriefing, Sakharov went to the American news media with his story, and has remained a media favorite since. This did not sit well with the American intelligence community.

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anything in the United States (he wants).

ESPIONAGE: Really! Can they tap into say, the National Security Agency computers? The big ones like the Cray computers?

SAKHAROV: Every computer is accessible. *Every* computer is accessible. Otherwise they would be useless. There have been already many instances where young kids break into TRW personal credit files.

ESPIONAGE: Is the computer system in the Soviet Union as extensive as ours?

SAKHAROV: No, they're not computerized, and more sensitive files and information is not computerized. There is nothing to break into in the Soviet Union.

ESPIONAGE: Is it all just written down and filed?

SAKHAROV: It's filed, written down, and stored. It's a closed society, so everything sensitive—for example, if you look at embassy communications, Soviet communications, you will see that most sensitive communications are never broadcast. It's written down, and carried by diplomatic couriers.

ESPIONAGE: So if a computer expert who understood the Cyrillic alphabet went into Russia, he wouldn't get much?

SAKHAROV: He wouldn't get anywhere; no.

ESPIONAGE: How about the spy satellites and planes like the *Blackbird?*

SAKHAROV: Well, that's the strong part of American intelligence; that is their superior capability. Overhead reconnaissance, oh yeah.

ESPIONAGE: How about the human element of spying? Is there anything we haven't covered on that?

SAKHAROV: I think there is nothing exciting about spying. It's a bureaucratic procedure. It's a member of the bureaucracy working for the bureaucracy.

ESPIONAGE: Then why do you think it's so exciting in all the spy novels and such?

SAKHAROV: Well, I suppose it always will be fascinating to people and there will always be cases of illegal agents, but that's only a small part.

ESPIONAGE: So it's the small element that gets all the hurrah?

SAKHAROV: Uh huh.

ESPIONAGE: All right. Well, that wraps it up. Thank you *very* much. ■

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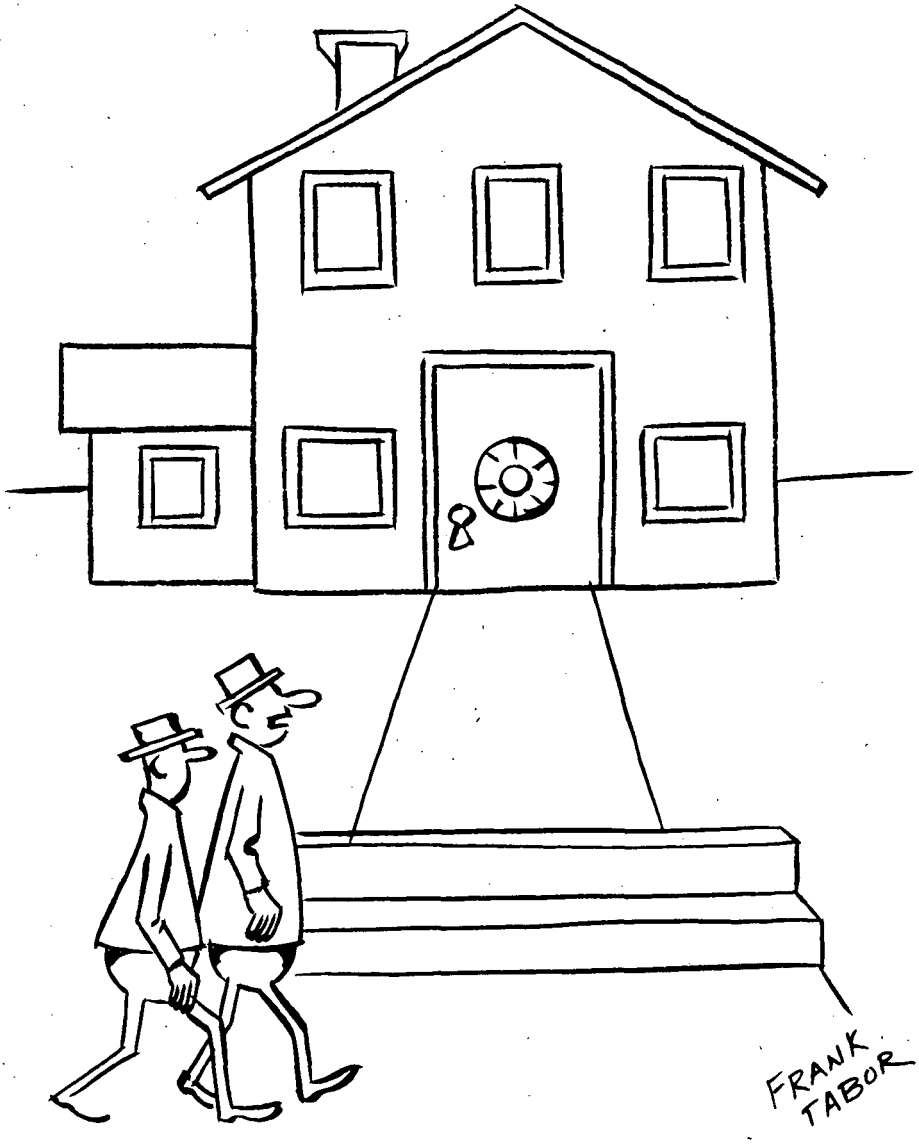

"I think it's a CIA safe house."

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THE SLEEPER ASSIGNMENT

by Edward D. Hoch

The airport at Bern was too small to accommodate the big jet from London, so Charles Spacer found himself forced to land in Zurich and travel by bus to his destination. He'd never been in Switzerland before, and an hour-long journey by expressway through the mountains afforded a perfect opportunity for him to enjoy the beauty of the place.

His destination was a sanitarium on the shore of the Lake of Thun, south of Bern. The coded message which reached him at the London office of Conco International had informed him that it had once been a center for the treatment of tuberculosis. Now it served mainly as a hospice for the terminally ill. Few visitors came to *Gelassen Haus*—Placid House in English—and for that reason it was a perfect dumping ground for certain embarrassing patients. The director of Gelassen Haus asked no questions so long as a check arrived each month.

His name was Gunter Krause and he greeted Spacer in the vast front hall of Gelassen Haus, walking quickly across the marble floor to shake hands. "A pleasure to have you here," he said in English with a strong Germanic accent. "I trust your flight from London was a pleasant one?"

"Very pleasant," Spacer confirmed. "I'm getting my first look at your country and liking what I see."

"Do you ski, or climb?"

"Neither, I'm afraid, which is probably why I've never been to the Swiss Alps before. I sit behind a desk and push papers around."

"Ah, yes—for Conco Interna-

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tional." There was a trace of irony in his voice, since he already knew Charles Spacer hadn't flown to Switzerland to sell him any of Conco's electronics gear.

Spacer saw no point in wasting valuable time playing games. "Let's get to the point. I'm here to see the Sleeper."

"Come into my office while I fill you in on developments, Mr. Spacer." He led the way past a blonde-haired woman who seemed to serve as his secretary. "No calls, Miss Darcy."

"Very well, sir," she replied formally, with barely a glance at Spacer.

Krause's office was decorated in a style that could only be called pre-war Germanic, a mixture of 1930s' art deco with some particularly ugly black busts of German composers and writers. The place made Spacer uncomfortable, and the stiff leather armchair he was given for a seat didn't improve his spirits. "You have a beautiful view of the lake," he remarked, trying to find something positive in the experience.

Gunter Krause stared at the window as if he'd forgotten its existence. "Yes, yes. This time of year is especially nice, with the first warmth of spring."

"Now about the Sleeper—"

"That is a code your organization uses. Here at Gelassen Haus our clients all have names. The patient in room 511 is Mickle Sannec."

"All right. My instructions are very clear on the—"

"How much do you know of Sannec's background, Mr. Spacer?"

"I know he's been in a coma for twelve years, ever since he was nearly killed by a booby-trapped suitcase.

"And now he's awakened."

Gunter Krause held his hands wide in the hackneyed gesture of a stage magician. "Now he has awakened. I wish I could tell you his amazing recovery is due to the fine treatment he has received here at Gelassen Haus, but the truth is his conscious mind simply began to function again. It sometimes happens with patients in a deep coma for many years. An illness may have triggered it in his case."

"How many people know about his recovery?"

"Well, of course the staff here knows. And it's possible some of the other patients know, too. But no one on the outside has been told with the exception of the man in Washington who pays the bills. I assume he is the one who contacted you."

"Yes," Spacer admitted. He was used to these trouble-shooting assignments from across the ocean. The position at Conco enabled him to travel about Europe and still be on call when needed. "They want me to interview Sannec. I assume he can have a visitor."

Gunter Krause smiled slightly. "The person who pays the bills can send a visitor at any time. We are very accommodating for two

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hundred dollars a day." He led Spacer out another door of his office and across the corridor to a small elevator. They emerged on the top floor of the sanitarium.

To Spacer's unpractised eye it looked much like the hospitals he'd visited from time to time in England and other European countries. Not quite as sterile and efficient as American hospitals, perhaps, but with more of a homelike atmosphere. The furnishings seemed different in each room they passed, and one elderly male patient sat in a wheelchair enjoying a drink from a bottle of French cognac on a table by his side.

Krause paused at the closed door of room 511. "I have had a nurse with him constantly since he came out of his coma. I understand the special importance of Mr. Sannec."

Charles Spacer entered the sickroom expecting to find a thin, pale-skinned man just returned from twelve years among the dead. Instead, he was greeted by the sight of a handsome bearded man seated in a chair by the window, chuckling at something the nurse had just read him from the newspaper. He seemed younger than the 38 years listed as his age on the official records, and Spacer had the thought that perhaps the coma had somehow frozen the aging process. He was indeed a bit thin, but seemed in good health.

There was, of course, no sign of the head wound which had caused the coma in the first place, but he was still surprised when Mickle Sannec rose from his chair to shake hands. "You must be Mr. Spacer from London," he said in passably good English. "I was told to expect you." He sat down again, a bit unsteady on his feet.

"I'm pleased to see you looking so well," Spacer commented. "It's been quite an ordeal for you."

"They've taken good care of me here. I feel as if I've merely awakened from a refreshing night's sleep."

"Has he had his lunch, Nurse Andrews?" Krause asked.

"I just removed the tray, sir," she replied, her voice confirming Spacer's first impression that she was British. "Shall I wait outside?"

"That would be good. I'll leave you alone with our patient, Mr. Spacer. You can return to my office when you finish."

When they were alone, Spacer took a chair opposite Sannec and removed a small tape recorder from his pocket. "Washington has asked me to visit you. Do you mind if I tape our conversation?"

The bearded man shrugged. "Not at all. Will I be going to America now?"

"Was that your destination twelve years ago?"

"Yes."

"Suppose you tell me exactly what happened, as you remember it."

"I was a Yugoslav citizen living in Albania when I decided to defect to the West—but you must

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have all this in your records."

"Go ahead," Spacer said with a wave of his hand.

"I was 26 years old at the time, and I held a low-level position with the Albanian government which gave me access to certain coded cable traffic between that country and Communist China. You'll remember China and Albania were close allies during that period." He took a sip of water from a glass by his side. "Nurse Andrews tells me all that has changed now."

"China cut off aid to Albania in 1978," Spacer told him. "Albania had sided with Vietnam in that country's dispute with China and China responded by withdrawing its technicians and ending aid. Albanian students were sent home from China. Your country has been more or less isolated ever since."

"I think of myself as a Yugoslav," Sannec corrected. "What of Shehu, the prime minister of Albania?"

"Reported to have committed suicide in 1981, although Western intelligence believes he was assassinated by political enemies."

"Then I suppose the information I brought with me is dated. . . but I might still tell you some interesting—"

"Perhaps. What do you remember about the bomb blast that almost killed you?"

"Very little. I'd flown from Albania to Rome, where I was to make contact with an American

"In Washington they think you could still be useful. There are things you could tell us about infiltrating the government."

intelligence agent. In my room at a Rome hotel, I started to unpack my suitcase. That was the last thing I remembered until I woke up a few days ago. At first I couldn't believe it when Nurse Andrews told me I'd been in a coma for twelve years."

"The man you were to meet was named Ramsey Crowder. Did you make contact with him before the explosion?"

"No, I'd come straight from the airport. Someone back in Albania must have booby-trapped my suitcase before I left."

"Any idea who?"

"No," he replied after a second's hesitation.

"The records show you were unmarried, but perhaps you were living with someone—"

"A young Albanian woman named Magda. But it was never too serious with either of us."

"Did she know you were defecting with state secrets?"

"I. . .yes, she knew."

"And she helped you pack?"

"Yes," he admitted. "I suppose it had to be Magda who tried to kill me."

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Spacer glanced at his notes. "Whatever material you brought with you was destroyed in the explosion, of course. When it appeared you could be in a coma for years, you were sent here to Gelassen Haus. The United States government has paid your expenses."

"I appreciate that."

"In Washington they think you could still be useful. The government of Albania has changed greatly in 12 years, and many of the people you knew are dead or in disgrace, but the rulers still maintain their isolation from foreigners. There are things you could tell us about dealing with them, about infiltrating the government."

"Yes, I could do that."

"Very well," Spacer said, closing his notebook. "I'll contact Washington at once. We'll arrange for someone to accompany you to America."

"Won't it be you?"

"No, I'm just handling the preliminaries." He turned off the tape recorder and returned it to his pocket. "A pleasure to meet you. If I don't see you again I hope you have a good flight over."

"I have a lot of years to catch up on."

"Yes, you have," Spacer said, shaking hands again.

He took the elevator down to Krause's office, noting that Nurse Andrews hurried in to her patient as soon as he'd left the room. "Is Doctor Krause in?" he asked Miss Darcy, the secretary at the desk outside. "He wanted to see me again when I was finished with the patient."

She turned her pale blue eyes toward him. "He's not a doctor. He's only the administrator here."

"Well, Mr. Krause then. May I see him?"

"He's out on the grounds with a visitor—another American like yourself."

"Oh? Perhaps I can find them."

Spacer hurried out the main entrance and glanced in both directions. Down near the water he could see two figures strolling. He headed along the path toward them, fearful that the presence of another American could only mean the press had somehow learned about the awakened sleeper.

But as he approached Gunter Krause and his visitor, he saw that the problem was a far more serious one. The tall slender man in the cashmere topcoat turned toward him for an instant and Spacer recognized the pock-marked face and dark eyes from a meeting once in Paris. It was Ramsey Crowder, the agent to whom Sannec was defecting twelve years ago.

"Charles Spacer, isn't it?" Crowder asked, seeming surprised by the sight of him. "What are you doing here?"

"Gelassen Haus needed some electronic equipment."

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Crowder didn't believe a word of it. He turned to Krause. "Why didn't you tell me this man was here?"

"I didn't see the need—"

"That's why you got me away from the building, so I wouldn't run into him!"

"Leave us alone for a few minutes," Spacer suggested to Krause. "I'm sure we can settle this matter quickly."

The administrator hesitated, but then seemed to remember that it was Spacer's people who paid the bills. He shrugged and turned away in silence, heading back toward the sanitarium building.

"What are you doing here?" Crowder asked when Krause was out of earshot. "Still running errands for Washington?"

"I do a few jobs for them," Spacer admitted.

"I'm out of it. Have been for years."

"I know. What are you doing here?"

"Call it a loose end. Someone told me Mickle Sannec is back among the living."

"You must have very good sources to have found out so soon."

"It was an anonymous message, actually, delivered to my Paris apartment. Sheila and I are living there now, you know."

Spacer did know. Sheila was a British code clerk with whom Crowder had carried on an indiscreet affair. The messy divorce from his wife back home was one of the things that impelled him to leave intelligence work and settle in Paris. "What did the message say?"

"*Sannec is awake.* Just three words. Odd, isn't it?"

"Very odd. It's almost as if someone was trying to lure you here."

"For what purpose?"

Spacer shrugged. "I guess to answer that I'd need to know why you came. The man tried to defect twelve years ago. It's a different world now. The government of Albania is different. Sannec was important for what he could tell us about China. Today the government of the United States is closer to China than Albania is. And you've retired from intelligence work."

"He was still my fish to pull in, Spacer. It wasn't just the divorce that forced me out. There was this damned cloud over the whole Sannec affair. Once he left Albania he was supposed to be under my protection. Instead, he got blown up before I ever saw him that day." He fumbled in his pocket for a cigarette, glancing up at the dark clouds gathering in the western sky. "Maybe we'd better head back before the rain starts."

Spacer fell into step beside him. "And you came here to tell him you regretted what happened?"

"I suppose so. I figured I owed him that much after twelve years."

"He seems to think the bomb was planted by a woman named Magda, with whom he was living."

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"That was our conclusion, too, at the time."

"Whatever happened to her?"

"Gone on to bigger and better posts in Albanian intelligence, I should think. She was a handsome young woman, as I remember."

They'd reached the front doors of Gelassen Haus just as the first drops of rain began to fall. Hurrying inside, Spacer saw that Miss Darcy was away from her desk. He glanced into Krause's office but that was empty, too. "I suppose we just sit down and wait," he suggested.

"You've seen Mickle Sannec, of course."

"Briefly, yes. But I couldn't take you up there without Krause's approval. He's running this place, not me."

Ramsey Crowder snorted. "This place is a warehouse for Western intelligence organizations. They pay the bills to keep their people on ice. You're running things, not Krause."

Gunter Krause reappeared at that moment. "I'm glad you got back before the rain," he said, settling down behind his desk.

Crowder went off to use the men's room and Spacer asked, "How many people did you tell about Sannec's recovery? Did you notify Ramsey Crowder?"

"Certainly not! Only the staff and a few patients know. I never heard of Crowder before he walked into my office an hour ago, while you were upstairs. My secretary was away from her desk and he simply appeared in the doorway, introducing himself. I took him for a stroll around the grounds so he wouldn't see you. I thought at first he might be from the press."

Crowder rejoined them. "I'd like to see Sannec now," he said.

The director glanced at Spacer, seeking his approval. "It's all right," Spacer said. "I'll go up with him."

Mickle Sannec was surprised to see the second American, and it took him a moment to remember Crowder. "Of course! You contacted me in Albania when I was still with Magda. You arranged for my defection. You look older."

"It's twelve years," Crowder pointed out. "You're thinner but you look the same, even with the beard."

"They fed me through a tube. It hampered the appetite."

"I'm sorry about what happened, twelve years ago."

"I should not have been so trusting. I knew Magda was a government agent. Why did I expect her to stay loyal to me when I was leaving her?"

"Will you go to America now?"

The defector glanced at Spacer. "I hope so. I could still cause some embarrassment to the Albanian government. Will you arrange it, Mr. Crowder?"

"I'm no longer with the government, but I'm sure Spacer here will place you in good hands."

Sannec seemed tired and when Nurse Andrews had helped him

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back into bed they said goodbye and left the room. Outside the clouds had loosed their full fury and raindrops pounded against the windows. Crowder was silent at first and after they were in the elevator Spacer asked him, "Nothing's wrong, is it? That's really Sannec?"

Crowder seemed surprised at his question. "Of course. Who else would it be?"

"Your mention of the warehouse earlier suggested a wild idea to me. Krause could simply fail to report patient deaths and keep receiving money for them."

"Hardly!" Crowder replied. "Most are short-termers with a family somewhere in the world. And even with Sannec, I'm sure fingerprints and dental charts were taken at the time of his admission. What made you think of such a bizarre idea?"

"Someone wanted you here and I'm wondering why. One possibility would be so you could expose a false Sannec."

"You can forget that one. It's really him."

"That message you received in Paris. How was it delivered?"

"A telegram, sent from here."

"Do you have it with you?"

"No, I didn't think to bring it." They left the elevator and he spotted a small staff dining room. "I'd like some coffee. How about you?"

Spacer waved his hand. "Go ahead. I want to speak with Krause again."

He found Miss Darcy typing at her desk. She informed him the director was making his rounds. "He does it every day at mid-afternoon."

"How many patients do you have?" Spacer asked.

"Only twenty-nine right now, though we could handle fifty or more. When I came in January there were forty, but several of them have recovered enough to be discharged. Mr. Krause says there are always a number of discharges in the spring. The weather makes people feel reborn after winter."

Spacer sat down and picked up a magazine on skiing. Within moments, Krause reappeared, charging off the elevator as if pursued by demons. "Miss Darcy, get me the local police."

"What's wrong?" Spacer asked, catching the panic in the man's voice.

Krause turned towards him as if suddenly remembering who he was. "Mickle Sannec—he's been murdered!"

Crowder joined them a few minutes later, as Krause and Spacer waited for the elevator. "What's the matter? What's everyone dashing around for?"

"Sannec is dead," Spacer told him quickly. "Dr. Krause found him while making his rounds just now. He'd been stabbed through the heart, apparently while he slept."

"My God!"

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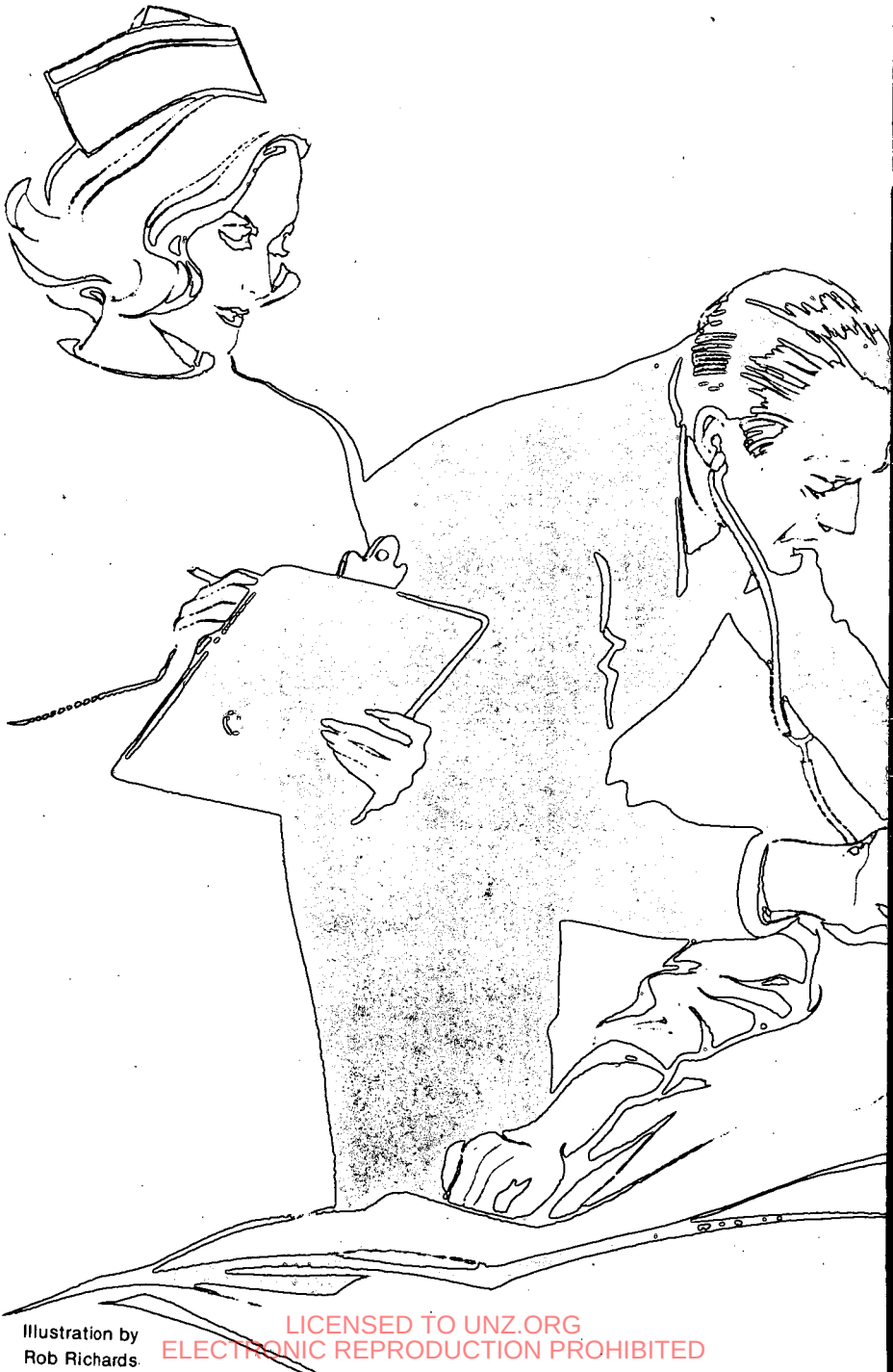

Illustration by
Rob Richards

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The doorway to room 511 was crowded with staff members, but they scattered as Krause issued sharp orders in German. Only Nurse Andrews remained, sobbing by the bedside. "He was sleeping peacefully when I left him," she insisted. "I was only gone for ten minutes—"

"That was long enough," Krause growled. "The police are on their way. You can explain it to them."

"It must have been an outsider. None of us would have killed him. We just brought him back to life!"

Spacer glanced at the figure on the bed. The dagger had been left in the wound and there was very little external bleeding. He'd died peacefully, at least, after his years of sleep. "Could I speak with you outside?" he asked Nurse Andrews.

"Where are you going?" Crowder asked him.

"I just want to ask a few questions. I'll be back."

They walked down the hall out of earshot and Nurse Andrews said, "They can't blame this on me. I had nothing to do with his death."

"No one's trying to blame you. I simply want more information about Sannec's condition. How long have you cared for him?"

"I. . .about two years now. Almost two years. I started here in June. I had a special fondness for him from the beginning. Sometimes when things were slow in the evening I'd read to him out of magazines, just in case he could hear me."

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"How was it that he came out of the coma finally? Did he just wake up?"

"No, that was the oddest part of all. About a month ago, something went wrong with his intravenous feeding. I suppose he received the wrong mixture or something, but it was as if he'd been poisoned. For a week or so we thought we were going to lose him, but then he finally started coming out of it, and as his condition improved his body grew more restless. I told Dr. Krause it was as if he was fighting to wake up. Finally, a few days ago, he did."

"Interesting. Was there an investigation of what happened with his feeding?"

"Dr. Krause asked some questions, but then when he started to improve everyone forgot about it."

"Thank you, Nurse Andrews. You've been a big help."

She had one thing to add. "The other nurses are saying it couldn't be one of us. They think it had to be that other American—or yourself."

He found Ramsey Crowder and said, "I want you to walk around this place and see if you recognize anybody. I want you to check all of the patients, along with the doctors and nurses."

"What's that going to prove?" Crowder asked.

"The person who sent that message knew you, or knew of you. More than that, they knew where to locate you. Sannec's killer is someone from the past, someone who killed him because he'd awakened from the coma. Even after twelve years, they were afraid of what he could tell. I'm hoping you'll recognize that person from your days in Albania."

"I suppose it's worth a try."

Spacer accompanied him to tell Gunter Krause what they had in mind. The director was standing outside Sannec's room, waiting for the police to arrive. "Do what you want," he said. "The police should be here momentarily."

"Who works here beside the medical staff?"

"We have some kitchen help, of course, and laundry and housekeeping people. Our bookkeeping and billing are handled by an office in Bern." He answered the question automatically, his mind already on the police investigation and what it would do to the reputation of Gelassen Haus. "I suppose your government will cancel its contracts with us now," he said sadly.

"I have no idea," Spacer answered honestly.

He hurried along the top-floor corridor with Crowder, stopping for a glance into each room. Many of them were empty, as Miss Darcy had told him, and most of the patients seemed too feeble or infirm to have plunged a dagger into Sannec's chest. The lower floors were the same.

"I don't know any of these people," Crowder insisted.

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"How about the nurses?"

"They're too young. Most of them would have been barely into their teens twelve years ago." There were only three doctors on duty, and here, too, Crowder shook his head. "I never saw them before."

They'd just completed their tour of the kitchen and laundry room when a police car drew up in front. Gunter Krause saw it from his office and hurried out to meet them. The man in charge was Commissioner Leck, a sturdy Swiss officer who apologized for the delay, explaining that they'd driven out from Bern because local officers were otherwise engaged.

Krause introduced him to Spacer and Crowder, somehow giving the impression that they'd arrived together. Commissioner Leck smiled. "I'll want to see you both later," he said, switching to English. "But first I must look at the body."

Crowder paced the entrance hall glumly as they waited to be questioned. "I have a feeling we should have departed before his arrival. If word gets out about our presence here, the papers will build the whole thing into some sort of American plot."

"Only if we don't come up with the killer."

Crowder glanced at him oddly. "You have an idea about that?"

"Maybe."

He stopped pacing and came over to sit by Spacer. "You think I killed Sannec, don't you? You think I was a double agent and I tried to kill him in Rome twelve years ago. When I learned he was out of the coma, I came here to finish the job."

Spacer smiled at him. "I'll admit the thought crossed my mind. I wouldn't be doing my job if I hadn't considered it."

Crowder turned away, trying to control his anger. "I'm going to call Paris. I want to talk to Sheila."

"Perhaps you'd better wait," Spacer said. "You may have more to tell her a little later."

The investigation dragged on through the afternoon. Commissioner Leck was a shrewd man, but he seemed not too interested in what had happened in the past. "I don't look at twelve years ago for motives," he told Spacer. "I look at today. Did the man have any money in his room?"

"Of course not. Where would it have come from?"

The detective shrugged. "You might have brought it to him."

"But I didn't."

They went on sparring for a few more minutes and then Spacer was dismissed. Leck was using the director's office for his questioning so Gunter Krause had been forced to move across the hall to an unused sitting room. He was there now with Ramsey Crowder, who'd already been questioned. Spacer glanced back across the hall, where Nurse Andrews was

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just entering the office to await being questioned by Leck.

"I should get a message off to Washington about what's happened," Spacer told the director. "Could I dictate something for your secretary to type up?"

"Of course," Krause said. "I'm sure she can be spared for a minute."

"Do you want me to leave?" Crowder asked.

"Stay where you are. It's just routine."

Miss Darcy entered and smiled at Spacer, taking a seat with her steno pad. Crowder fumbled for one of his cigarettes.

"This is a memo to *Spacecap, Washington,* to be sent by diplomatic cable." The secretary brushed the blonde hair from her eyes and started to write.

Crowder was just lighting his cigarette when suddenly he paused in mid-motion.

"Mickle Sannec slain here this date," Spacer went on—

Gunter Krause was frowning at Crowder.

"My God," Crowder murmured, the cigarette dropping from his fingers.

"Am continuing investigation—"

The point on Miss Darcy's pencil broke and she stooped to get another from her purse.

"It's her!" Crowder's voice was a shout now. "It's Magda!"

The smile was frozen on Miss Darcy's face as her hand came up holding a tiny automatic pistol.

A few minutes later, when she'd been overpowered and delivered to Commissioner Leck's people, Leck and the others demanded explanations. "You knew it all the time, didn't you, Spacer?" Ramsey Crowder asked. "That's how you were able to grab her so quickly."

"I suspected. I needed your reaction before I could be certain."

"But Miss Darcy had been working here for months before Sannec came out of his coma," Krause insisted. "How could she be someone from his past?"

"Miss Darcy, or Magda, came here in January with the express purpose of killing Mickle Sannec, her former lover. Nurse Andrews told me that Sannec came out of his coma following his near death from some wrong mixture in his intravenous feeding. She said it was like poison, and I think that's exactly what it was. Miss Darcy waited a month or two after you hired her, to avoid suspicion and determine the safest method of murder. Then she sneaked into his room and substituted a poisoned I.V. preparation."

"Why kill him if he was already in a coma?"

"The people who sent her were taking no chances. He told me himself that he still had valuable information which could hurt government officials in Albania. Magda was chosen because she knew him by sight and because, in a sense, she hadn't completed her assignment of twelve years ago.

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But if the bomb failed to kill him, her poison was an even greater failure. It actually made him better! He came out of his coma by some unexplained medical miracle and passed from being an abstract future threat to an immediate danger. I suppose they would have shot her back home for such a bungle. She knew her third attempt to kill Sannec had to succeed at all costs."

"That's when she sent me the message?" Crowder asked.

"Exactly! She lured you here so you could be blamed for his death. Your motive might not be clear, but she figured your presence would at least confuse the police. Once you were here, she sneaked up to 511 again, only this time she made certain, with a knife."

"What made you suspect her?" Crowder asked. "She looked so different with her blonde hair. It took me a couple of minutes to be sure, and you had never laid eyes on her!"

"Accepting your story of a message summoning you here, I had to accept that someone at Gelassen Haus knew of your past connection with Sannec, and knew where to reach you. That implied an intelligence organization which had kept track of you. When I heard from Nurse Andrews about the strange circumstances of Sannec's recovery—the attempted poisoning—I suspected an agent had made an earlier try at killing him. Miss Darcy told me she'd only been here since January, and then I realized a very odd thing—she seemed to be purposely staying out of your sight, Crowder."

"What?"

"Think about it. Krause told me she was away from her desk and you simply appeared at the door of his office. Naturally she could see you coming up the walk to the front door and she kept out of sight. The same thing happened later when we returned in the rain. She was away from her desk again. I was certain you'd caught no more than a fleeting glimpse of her at best, and I decided I needed a confrontation between you two to prove my suspicion. Even on our tour we didn't run into her, so I pretended I needed to dictate a cable to her."

"It worked," Crowder agreed, "but almost too well. You were fast getting that gun away from her. This will be a feather in your cap, Spacer."

But Charles Spacer didn't see it that way. "I'm afraid Washington will view it as a failure. After all, the patient died." ■

SPY TALK: *Snuggling* - covert broadcasting technique of setting up a clandestine opposition radio broadcast next to the official government frequency; one simple misdial by a listener would result in his believing he was hearing "official" reports.

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THE MAGICIAN

by David R. Urbach

The Brandenburg Gate stands majestically at the west end of the Avenue Unter den Linden, just east of the Berliner Mauer, the Wall of Shame separating the west - and eastern sectors of Berlin. It was fashioned after the Propylaea in the Athenian Acropolis, its pillars surmounted by the Quadriga of Victory. Completed in 1791, the gate is reminiscent of the glory and victory of early Berlin, and was, appropriately, damaged during World War II. Now rebuilt, it stands as one of East Berlin's most famous landmarks, drawing hordes of admiring tourists, citizens and passers-by to its foot.

One of the latter group was Armand Level, an unassuming French mercenary garbed in a full-length beige overcoat and expensive Italian shoes. His light frame hunching below its usual five-foot-eight, Level dodged through the crowd assembled at the base of the Brandenburger Tor. His photograys darkened while he stood, ostensibly admiring the architecture, keeping an eye out for the large German assassin strolling eastward on the Unter den Linden.

Level thought back to the beginning of the matter,

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in Zurich, Switzerland. He had received a mysterious phone call instructing him to hire a room in the Carlton Elite on Bahnhofstrasse, under the name of M. Claude Prudhomme. Although lacking in economic resources, Level convinced himself to comply with the odd request, hoping the deal would pan out into something substantial. On the second day after his registration in the hotel, he heard a knock on the door. He cautiously opened it, revealing two Americans just outside the doorway.

"Guten Tag, Herr Prudhomme-Level," said the one on the left, in fluent German. Bewildered, Level let them in without saying a word, and locked the door behind them.

They seated themselves at a small round table near the window. Level followed, sitting on the remaining chair. His manner was slow, more from suspicion than caution. He waited for them to begin. The man who had greeted him at the door spoke first. "It is odd, to be a German-speaking Frenchman, is it not?" he said in German.

Level grunted noncommittally.

The second American cleared his throat. He too spoke the language, albeit less naturally than his companion. "We want to employ your services," he said haltingly, "to prevent someone from getting into West Berlin through the Wall. He is a recognized German assassin; Ernst Ziegen."

As his partner spoke, the first man opened his briefcase and extracted a photograph. He presented it to Level, who examined the face carefully. In moments, he had memorized every nuance, every distinctive feature of the countenance. He pocketed the picture.

At this point, the fluent American continued. "We have several questions to ask of you," he said, "if you don't mind."

Level grunted affirmatively.

"How did you acquire the nickname 'the magician'?"

Level took a deep breath, and exhaled like one about to embark on a long, tedious narrative. He did not disappoint his audience.

Briefly, some years before, Level had travelled around the United States. He had found employment in a Las

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Vegas club, as a pickpocket. It had been his job to steal the patrons' wallets and watches, and to return them later on. It had been an awkward job, but one that he had been uniquely suited for, as a result of his dubious profession. It was important that a mercenary know how to steal and deceive; Level was one of the best.

"Oh, and gentlemen," said Level at the end of the story, "there is the issue of payment."

"How much?" asked one of the Americans. The other added that payment would be in American dollars at a Zurich bank. A numbered account would be set up for Level, the contents of which could be verified by telephone. The account would be emptied if Level should fail. The Americans would cover the hotel bill, and give him an allowance of one thousand American dollars for expenses.

Level did some quick calculations in his head. "Ten thousand dollars," he said curtly.

"Done," said the man with the briefcase. He rose and extended his hand to the Frenchman. Level shook it cautiously. They worked out the details concerning when and where, but the why would always remain a mystery for Level. It was not his to inquire.

He had shown the Americans out the hotel door. Now he strolled down the Avenue Unter den Linden in East Berlin, his gaze never leaving Ernst Ziegen, just fifty metres ahead on the crowded avenue.

The big German turned south off the avenue into Friedrichstrasse, heading toward the Wall as it turned east to meet the street at "Checkpoint Charlie." Level found himself caught in a crowd of people at the corner. *"Gestatten Sie,"* he said brusquely, shoving his way through.

He regained sight of Ziegen ten metres down Friedrichstrasse. The assassin took his time, seemingly admiring the view as he sauntered along the street. Although not as pretty as West Berlin, the eastern sector is still an attractive tourist city. Ziegen's gaze seemed to shift between west and east, from the Platz der Akademie to the Wall, its graffiti-decorated surface looming unseen in the distance.

They continued along for another half-kilometre, until the German turned abruptly into a small store. Level,

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sensing an opportunity, followed him inside. Ziegen walked up and down the aisles, stopping occasionally to examine something. The German assassin picked out a map, and walked to the end of the line at the sales counter. Level followed him in line, holding merchandise haphazardly snatched from a shelf to avoid the German's suspicion. Ziegen reached into his pocket, pulling out his wallet. His passport protruded a bit then, but the German stuffed it back in.

Suddenly, Level was back in Las Vegas, the crowd intently watching the magician performing on the stage. He brushed against the German, applying enough pressure to mask the touch of his hand in the assassin's pocket.

It was Ziegen's turn, finally, and he walked up to the sales counter where he put the map on the desk, asking *"Wieviel kostet es?"*

"Das macht drei Mark, bitte," replied the cashier. Ziegen removed the money from his wallet, and replaced the latter in his pocket, where his hand met Level's. He swivelled around, grabbing the Frenchman's hand which was still gripping the passport halfway out of the German's pocket. Ziegen stuffed the map in another pocket with his left hand, as his right arm clenched around Level's neck. He dragged the Frenchman out of the store into Friedrichstrasse, then into an alley. He grabbed his collar, and held him a full foot above the ground. "Who are you?" asked Ziegen menacingly, in German.

Level hesitated a moment, then he answered, his voice stuttering and full of fear, "I'm sorry. I am a poor maaa . . ."

Ziegen pulled his large fist out of Level's abdomen, the Frenchman screaming in pain. "The hell you are!" shouted the assassin. He pulled his arm back to punch Level again.

But Level's hand, ostensibly massaging his damaged stomach, pulled a .38 automatic from his belt and shoved it into Ziegen's neck. "Put me down, German bastard," he said. Ziegen released his hold on Level's collar.

The events that followed will remain unclear in Armand Level's memory: Somehow, the German, with

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blinding speed, grabbed the gun as a shot was fired wildly into the air. He smashed the butt into Level's head and walked away as the Frenchman lay in a pool of blood in a Berlin alley.

At the intersection of Friedrichstrasse and the Wall is "Checkpoint Charlie." That is where Ernst Ziegen waited to cross from East Berlin into West Berlin. Carrying no baggage, he proceeded directly to the passport check, where he removed from his pocket the passport which he had come so close to losing only an hour before. If he had indeed lost his passport, he would be denied entry into West Berlin, and would be unable to complete his assignment. The German border guard examined the small book carefully, then opened it wide and held it before Ernst Ziegen.

The German assassin gulped. What he was staring at was not his passport but a blatant forgery. The picture was of a black man.

"You will have to come with me," said the German officer to Ziegen.

In those moments, many things went through the mind of the assassin. He contemplated the penalties for trying to cross a border illegally, and for forging a passport. He considered what would happen if he was unable to complete his assignment in West Berlin. His eyes took on a wild, savage gleam and he ran, like a madman, right through the crossing in the Wall.

There were only two shots, and Ernst Ziegen lay dead on the concrete. Two German guards carried him away, as a gathering crowd looked on. Interestingly, everyone in that crowd was too preoccupied to notice the small Frenchman, his beige coat stained with blood. Armand Level's face contorted into a smile as he took Ernst Ziegen's real passport from his pocket and ripped it into small pieces. He walked away from the scene, masked by the throngs trying to see what was going on. He was tired, hurt...and happy. Ten thousand American dollars were waiting for him in a Swiss bank. He looked once more at the Wall, then turned, satisfied, and walked up Friedrichstrasse.

Years after his last attempt, Armand Level had once again performed magic. ■

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A Penny Saved. . .

by Jack Petree

The complex was located in the frozen northland under a hundred feet of stone and permafrost. The great scientist who toiled there had won two Nobels before entering the complex to begin the most important work of his life. "Soon," he thought. "Soon, the Motherland will have a weapon that will make her supreme among the nations of the world.

Josef was elated. Finally the enemy of the Motherhood would be brought to its knees. He addressed the fifty agents seated before him:

"Comrades," he began. "You have been chosen to participate in the greatest mission ever undertaken on behalf of the Motherland. You will be directly responsible for the elimination of our principal enemy from the face of the earth." The agents' eyes fastened on the fifty containers stacked on a table in front of the leader.

"Each of these packets contains two pennies," the leader continued; "it is the most common coin in the United States. A submarine waits outside. When we finish our meeting, the vessel will take you to various rendezvous points off the enemy coast. You will be briefed as to your targets once on

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board. At precisely 10:05 AM, August sixth, you will go to a busy area in the target city you've been given and spill the pennies onto the ground. Choose an area where the coins are certain to be found."

The leader paused and wiped his brow. He smiled and continued. "Each of these coins, gentlemen, is coated with a substance containing a virus developed by our greatest scientist," he said. "The virus is so potent that all samples of it, other than those contained in these packets, have been destroyed." The leader took a step back from the packets though he knew them to be completely safe.

"The germ dies after one hour's exposure to air but, during that hour, anyone who picks up the coin will absorb the germ into his bloodstream. That person will die one week later. Anyone coming into physical contact with the victim will also die. The victim feels nothing until the last hours, so the disease caused by the virus will spread through the population like wildfire. Estimates are for a 70 per cent kill."

The leader's voice rose as he portrayed the destruction of his enemy. "Go!" he finally shouted. "To the revolution!"

"To the revolution!" the fifty men selected for the mission shouted back.

Timmy Bensen and his friend John walked across the street. It was a busy street so they hurried.

Timmy was poor by American standards. John's father was a prosperous attorney. He numbered a Senator as one of his clients.

As the boys hurried, Timmy's eye caught the bright flash of sunlight on polished copper. On another day, Timmy might have been tempted to pick the penny out of the gutter, but John was with him today and John's dad was rich. Timmy gave the penny a contemptuous kick. The coin rolled along the curb and down a storm sewer. Without a human host, the virus coating the coin died within the hour. Timmy and the inhabitants of the missile base near which he lived never knew they'd been targeted.

Joe needed a drink; already he was shaking. His eyes caught the sheen of freshly minted copper. Joe stopped and reached, then drew his hand back, disappointed. "So bright and only a penny?" Joe straightened and briskly tucked in his ragged shirttail.

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"Hey, Mister," he said to a passerby, "got half a buck? I sure could use a cup of coffee." As Joe pocketed the two quarters the man had given him, he gave the penny a kick. It rolled under a building. Joe walked away whistling; he felt great. After all, a man has his pride.

The recall message arrived at 9:30 the morning of August sixth. Boris had been Ambassador for an unusually long time, so he was used to impossible demands, but this last was an outrage. "Be clear of the country by 10:00 AM," the message read. Fear clutched at the ulcer nestled in the Ambassador's stomach. Orders are orders, especially when they come directly from "Uncle" Josef. Boris made for the airport without bothering to pack.

The trip to the airport took nearly thirty minutes. The clock on the dashboard of the car read 9:40—it seemed hopeless but Boris knew there was a chance. If he didn't make the airport on time, he would become a non-person. He, obviously, couldn't follow orders. *Inability* to follow them was no excuse. As the pilot of the plane had been with Boris for a fair amount of time, the pilot would be suspect, and thus, a non-person also. The Tundra was cold. The pilot would wait.

The limo screeched to a halt. "Not bad," Boris muttered. The clock on the dash read 10:06. Boris hurried towards the gate where his plane waited, knowing the plane was already airborne according to the pilot's logbook. He began to run.

Because he was running, Boris was a step past the object before it registered on his mind as a coin. He almost didn't stop, but as a comrade had remarked some years before, "A kopek saved is a kopek earned." Boris stopped, picked up the penny, and once more ran to get his plane. The agent who'd carefully placed the penny in the airport walkway smiled as he saw the overweight "capitalist" pick up the penny and go on.

An ebullient Josef, supreme leader of the Motherland, personally met the airplane carrying Boris back from the States. As a gesture of friendship, and because Josef anticipated with glee the demise of the enemy state, Boris was greeted with a rarity: a personal handshake from the great leader, himself. ■

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The Defenestration Of Prague

Conclusion

by Josh Pachter

The man who is traveling as McKenna has never felt so ridiculous in his life. Or so frightened.

He is prowling up and down the tree-shaded lanes of the old Jewish cemetery in Prague, surrounded by an impossible number of ancient tombstones carved with indecipherable Hebrew characters. The grey-bearded caretaker who sold him his ticket for six crowns has given him a pamphlet written in execrable English which explains that the cemetery holds more than 12,000 graves dating from 1439 to 1787. McKenna could not be less interested if he tried.

He is carrying a rolled-up newspaper in his left hand as a

Illustration by Bruce Baker

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recognition signal, which is why he is feeling ridiculous. He is a medical researcher, an academic—not a spy—and he belongs back in his lab in Cincinnati, not halfway around the world in Czechoslovakia doing a miserable imitation of James Bond.

The man he is waiting for, the man for whom he is holding the newspaper, is a Czech biogeneticist, who has decided to go against the express policy of his government and deliver the results of his recent top-secret research to the West. He is afraid he will wind up isolated like Sakharov in Russia if he is found out, though—or, worse, in the Czech equivalent of the gulag—and for that reason he has insisted on conditions of absolute secrecy and has made it known he will only meet with a fellow scientist, with someone trained to understand him quickly and completely. This is why the man who is traveling as McKenna has been enlisted to come to Prague, why the elaborate McKenna cover identity has been evolved for him, why he does not as yet even know the name of the person he has come all this way to meet.

Only a single American has had access to that name so far, a black man known to McKenna as Stebbins—though that, too, is apparently a cover. Stebbins is ostensibly a minor functionary at the U.S. Embassy here, but in fact he is the Agency's point man in Prague. Through a circuitous chain of contacts, the Czech scientist has been put in touch with Stebbins, and the original plan was for Stebbins to get him together with McKenna.

But Stebbins is dead, murdered, not three hours ago, and it was McKenna who discovered his body—and this is why he is far too frightened to pay much attention to the absurdity of poking around this lonely cemetery with his rolled-up newspaper in his hand. Someone slit Stebbins' throat in an attempt to keep McKenna from linking up with the biogeneticist. As McKenna is quite fond of his own throat, he would just as soon quit now, come in from the cold, and carry it home with him intact. But Stebbins managed to leave him a message before he was killed, and McKenna's finding and correctly interpreting that message has resulted in a hurried telephone conversation with the still-anonymous Czech, and now, this meeting here at the Starý židovský hřbitov, the old Jewish cemetery.

McKenna roams over fallen brown leaves which crackle beneath his feet, sometimes keeping to the path of buckling concrete slabs which might as well be more tombstones laid end to end, sometimes kicking through the high grass and weeds to pick his way amongst the insane profusion of chipped and mossy markers, most of which are leaning at precarious angles and propping each other up in an immense stone house of cards which remains standing in violation of all logic.

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He turns up the collar of his overcoat, tucks his newspaper under one arm and stuffs his hands in his pockets. It is late afternoon and late November, and the wind that whips through the bare branches of the trees and stirs the fallen leaves at his feet has teeth. He wishes he had thought to bring his gloves, but they lie useless on the passenger seat of his rented Mercedes several blocks away; he fears that if he goes back for them he will miss his meeting.

The cemetery has four other visitors at this hour, three men and a woman, and each of them maintains a generous distance from the others and from McKenna as they shuffle along the twisting pathways. It is an intricate pavan they dance, the five of them carefully respecting each other's right to private communion with the long since dead.

Although some distance away, the three other men appear to be in their fifties or sixties, and McKenna wonders if one of them is his scientist, looking him over first and deciding whether or not to establish contact. When the contact ultimately comes, though, it is the woman who makes it.

She is younger than any of the men, younger even than McKenna —who is 48—though not by much. She has stocky, uninteresting features and wears a long grey coat wrapped tightly around her and a woolen cap pulled down to cover her ears. McKenna has noticed her several times during the last half hour, but has paid little attention to her since the one thing he does know about the man he is there to meet is that he is, in fact, a man. The voice on the telephone gave away that much, if little else. He becomes fully aware of her, though, when he realizes that she has stopped avoiding him and is beginning, very casually, to narrow the distance between them. As she nears him, he can see that her pale cheeks are red with the cold.

"McKenna's eyes drop back to the guards and their rifles, and he finds himself thinking Welcome to Czechoslovakia."

Just when they are about to pass on the narrow path, the heel of her shoe catches in a break in the concrete and she stumbles. McKenna jerks his hands from his pockets and manages to prevent her from falling, and she mutters a few Slavic syllables of what must be thanks and hurries away. He watches her go, then parts with a puzzled frown and resumes his aimless wandering. When he puts his hands back in his pockets, his fingertips brush a folded wad of paper which was not there before.

McKenna is sucking in rapid shallow bursts of painfully cold air by the time he reaches the castle an hour

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later, and he pauses at the head of the broad flight of stone steps to catch his breath and gaze out over the city. A glorious panorama unfolds beneath him, with Prague's majestic old buildings draped along the banks of the Vltava as far as the eye can see in both directions, barren trees stark in the foreground and the sky a backdrop of angry grey.

When he turns from the view at last, he is confronted by the immensity of the Pražský Hrad, Prague Castle, its grey and white lines dominating the cobblestoned square with almost tangible power. There are dozens of windows, and he wonders briefly if it was from one of those on this side of the building that the governors were defenestrated some 300 years in the past.

Two guards in drab-green uniforms and white gloves flank the castle's gateway; they stand at perfect attention with their rifles by their sides and their faces completely devoid of expression. Huge bronze statues tower over their heads, perched heavily atop the squat stone gateposts; each piece shows a vicious naked warrior with a club in his hands, threatening the terrified opponent who cringes at his feet. McKenna's eyes drop back to the guards and their rifles, and he finds himself thinking *Welcome to Czechoslovakia,* not for the first time this day.

It is almost dusk, and there is no one else in sight. McKenna checks the directions the woman in the cemetery gave him, and hurries on across the square. It is colder up here than it was on the other side of the river, and he is about ready to stop this damn chasing around and get indoors out of the wind.

A 10-minute walk brings him to a small sidestreet called Za Hládkovem, and he presses the buzzer marked Chýlková, at number eight, three times as instructed. There is an answering buzz and a click and he pushes the street door open. His footsteps echo hollowly off the dingy walls as he climbs more steps to the fourth floor; otherwise, the building is quiet.

He raps softly on the door of the Chýlková apartment, and it opens immediately. A strong arm pulls him inside, and the door eases shut behind him.

The apartment is dim, illuminated only by the fading daylight which filters in through drawn curtains at the windows. The man before him is little more than a hazy outline, a darker shape silhouetted against the shapes of the tired furniture.

"You were followed?" the figure whispers fiercely, in the same heavily-accented English McKenna has already heard.

He shakes his head, then realizes that the gesture must be invisible in this room and adds a spoken *no.* So this frightened shadow is the scientist he has come so many miles to see. "Dr. Chýlková?" he guesses, though he has never heard that name before and is un-

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sure of its pronunciation.

"Are you mad?" The voice sounds truly shocked. "Do you think I would bring you to my own flat? There is no Chýlková; this is a safe house arranged by your Mr. Stebbins." An urgent hand grabs his sleeve. "What has happened to Mr. Stebbins? Why didn't *he* bring you here, as we arranged?"

"He's dead. He was killed, murdered. His throat was cut."

There is a sharp intake of breath, and the hand drops away.

"I'm sorry," McKenna says.

When the other man speaks again, he sounds drained of all emotion, all feeling. "How did you find me, then?"

"Stebbins left a note with your phone number on it. Whoever killed him didn't find it, but I did."

"I see."

An uncomfortable silence descends between them, and McKenna breaks it by introducing himself. He gives his actual name, though he has been specifically instructed not to do so, both at Langley and again in Munich. In the face of Stebbins' death, however, the truth is all he has to offer his opposite number.

"Yes," the scientist says dully, "I have heard of you. Good things. I am glad it was you they sent. *My* name is Vítek, Akram Vítek."

McKenna is stunned. Stebbins' original message to Washington indicated that this mission involved a top-ranking figure, but no one—least of all McKenna himself—has even dreamed it could possibly be Akram Vítek, the Grand Old Man of biogenetics.

Unless, of course, this is a set-up of some kind, a devious plot to feed disinformation to the West. McKenna has never met Akram Vítek; as far as he knows the scientist has never been allowed to travel outside the Soviet bloc. But rare photographs of him have appeared in the international press from time to time, and McKenna has seen several of those pictures. He fumbles around the dim room for a moment, finds a table, a table lamp, and switches it on. He blinks his eyes helplessly until they adjust to the sudden light.

And, yes, the haggard old man in the shapeless grey suit is exactly who he claims to be. The long, thin face; the high forehead; the strong, hooked nose; the troubled black eyes—they are unmistakable.

"Dr. Vítek," says McKenna, approaching him. "I . . . it's a very great honor to meet you, sir."

The scientist seems embarrassed by this greeting, yet he takes the hand McKenna holds out to him and clutches it tightly, as if it were a lifeline and he a drowning man.

"The woman in the cemetery. . ." Mckenna says; they are the only words he can think of.

Vítek releases his hand at last. "My wife, Veronika."

"Yes, but, why? Why didn't you just direct me here when you had me on the phone?"

The old man drops onto a sagging sofa and rubs his temples

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with the beautiful fingers of a pianist. "I was confused," he explains. "I was not expecting the telephone. Stebbins was to bring you straight here. I needed time to think, so I sent you to the cemetery and had Veronika go there to look at you, to see if it was good to trust you. She has a feeling for such things, a . . . an intuition." He looks up with a grim smile. "It is not scientific, I know, but I have learned to value her judgment."

McKenna nods. He, too, has come to recognize the importance of human instinct. "And she decided I was alright," he goes on with the story, "so she passed me the directions to this place."

"Yes. You are certain you were not followed?"

"As certain as I *can* be."

"And yet," the old man sighs, "poor Stebbins."

Again they find themselves engulfed in a painful silence. The only way past it is to cover it over with trivia, which Vítek does clumsily, apologizing that he cannot offer McKenna tea or anything else to drink; except for a few sticks of furniture, the safe house is empty.

The ceremonial apology provides a transition from the sad horror of Stebbins' death to the exigencies of the business at hand. They seat themselves at a plain deal table in the center of the room and Akram Vítek launches into a lecture, a presentation of the background to his current research. McKenna copies the information meticulously in the notepad he has brought along for that purpose. They are no longer colleagues conversing; Vítek is the master, now, and McKenna his ardent disciple. The data flows smoothly from one to the other; the American has frequent pointed questions at first, but once the groundwork between them has been laid, the material is so clear and comprehensive that there is nothing further to ask. McKenna has only to make his notes, and to marvel at the phenomenal simplicity, the inevitability, of what this one man has accomplished in areas where no one else in the field has even *begun* to explore. The implications of Vítek's work are staggering, and for the first time since discovering Stebbins' body that morning, McKenna finds himself too caught up in his mission to be afraid.

In the end, it is his instincts which save him.

A floorboard creaks in the hallway outside the Chýlková apartment, nothing more. It is a common enough sound, an everyday sound, but McKenna's body reacts before his mind has time to tell it not to. He dives from the wooden chair in which he has been sitting, hits the floor, and rolls and winds up on his hands and knees in a dim corner of the room.

Only then does he revert from a self-protective animal to a thinking human being, and when he

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does his first thought is that he has left Akram Vitek alone and exposed at the table in the center of the room, staring at him as if McKenna has just gone completely mad.

But before he can do anything about it, it is already too late. The flimsy front door bursts open and a rat-faced Slav in a cheap blue suit barrels through the doorway, a silenced pistol held out before him.

The intruder squeezes off two quick shots, which take the gaping Czech scientist full in the chest and knock him backwards out of his chair.

Then he turns to locate the other man he has been told will be in this room, but as luck will have it he turns away from McKenna rather than towards him and the American—operating on automatic again—rushes him, folding both hands into one large fist and swinging fiercely at the wrist of his gun hand. There is a grunt of pain and the crack of bone as he connects, and the gun thuds heavily to the floor.

McKenna lunges then for the weapon, but Rat Face kicks it out of reach and fumbles an object from his pocket with his uninjured hand. There is a nasty *snick,* and the object becomes a switchblade knife.

The room gets very still.

That's the knife that killed Stebbins, McKenna realizes. That's the *man* who killed Stebbins. They ordered Stebbins' death to keep him from bringing me to Vitek. And when I got here on my own they sent Rat Face along to take us both out. This safe house isn't as safe as the poor old man thought.

The Slav with the knife moves closer.

McKenna backs away, step by step, keeping a good six feet between himself and the blade. A slight pressure on the seat of his pants warns him that he has butted up against his chair. His right hand drops, and his fingers touch the varnished wood.

Rat Face is closing the gap between them. One corner of his mouth turns up in a grotesque smile, and McKenna sees that his teeth are irregular and yellow. He is three feet away and coming closer when McKenna whips the chair around from behind him and smashes the intruder with all his strength. The knife goes flying, and Rat Face reels up against the windows, clutching at the thick drapery, blood spurting from a broken nose. The curtains pop free of the clips that hold them to the rod and spill down around Rat Face's shoulders like a cloak, like a shroud, and McKenna goes after him and lets him have it with the chair again. His body explodes through the glass and falls four stories to land in the back courtyard with a sickening crunch.

McKenna stands by the window looking down, his chest heaving, waiting for the curtains which cover the windows of the other apartments that look out over this

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courtyard to part, waiting for the screams and the sounds of running feet and dialing telephones.

But none of that happens. Didn't anyone *hear,* he wonders. Or are they just too damn scared of their own police to do anything about it?

He doesn't know. He will never find out.

The defenestration of Prague, he thinks, staring through the shattered window at the broken corpse below. He cannot take his eyes from the horrid figure—and when he does, he cannot take his eyes from the lifeless body of the old man on the floor.

This is, he thinks, and finds that there are no words in his vocabulary to describe what this is. Tragic? Unreal? *Too* real? Nothing fits.

There is a man lying dead on the floor, a man he has just now come to know, a man he has already begun to learn from, a man whose blood is the same color as was Stebbins'. Elsewhere in the city there is a woman, Veronika, a woman who will soon learn that she has become a widow. And below, in the courtyard, lies what is left of a paid assassin—a secret policeman? a soldier? a spy?—and perhaps there is another widow out there in the gathering night, waiting as is Veronika Vitek for a husband who will never again be coming home.

Why? Why the deaths, why the widows? Because a tired old man wanted to donate his knowledge to the world, to *all* the world, while his government and McKenna's government can not even agree to *have* a world in which such a transaction is considered acceptable, let alone commendable.

McKenna cannot stand it any longer. He wants nothing more than to get back into his rented Mercedes and drive straight across Europe and the Atlantic Ocean and the Eastern Seaboard to his home in Cincinnati, to get safely into bed with his own wife before she, too, winds up a widow.

But there is more than an ocean and parts of two continents in the way. There is a debriefing in Langley, for one thing—and, of more immediate concern, a Czech border crossing where they will be sure to be watching for him by the time he can get there.

No, the game has not yet played itself out, not entirely. But McKenna will spend the rest of it on the sidelines: he will get himself down to the American Embassy, and he will let *them* figure out how to send him home. Such questions are their business, not his. He is a scientist, not a diplomat, not a spy. He is a scientist, and he has had more than enough of this espionage bullshit to last him the rest of his life.

And yet—he does not forget to gather together his notes and bring them with him when he leaves the Chylkova apartment and picks his way downstairs in the darkness. ■

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Spying Through Time

by Rose Mary Sheldon

No historian would deny Hannibal his place in history as one of the world's greatest generals; yet few if any commentators have noted Hannibal's intelligence-gathering as one of the reasons for his success against the Romans. His victories, which brought Rome to the brink of physical and economic collapse, were often made possible because he knew ahead of time his enemy's location, intentions and capabilities. Hannibal's ability to stay one step ahead of his adversaries became his trademark, and this ability came from the effective use of his intelligence network.

Rome and Carthage had completely different attitudes toward intelligence-gathering. Like many Near Eastern empires before it, Carthage was well versed in the arts of communication and clandestine operations. Rome, on the other hand, looked down on what they considered "dirty tricks;" anything which appeared artificial or disingenuous seemed to them distasteful. They relied on their allies to supply them with any information they needed. The trouble with this system was it worked only as long as the ally thought it in his best interest to keep Rome informed; when an ally changed his mind, the system collapsed.

These contrasting attitudes became quickly apparent when the two powers went to war. In Spain, where Carthage had extended her empire, Hannibal set up a well-organized service of spies, messengers and diplomatic couriers who operated by both land and sea. The Carthaginian senate was kept well informed of Hannibal's intentions against Rome. Discovering Hannibal's plan of attack should have been the highest Roman priority, yet Hannibal was able to begin his war by crossing the Alps with 50,000 men,

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together with cavalry, baggage and elephants, without being detected. Rome had to wait for her allies in Marseilles to bring her the news that Hannibal was about to descend on the Po Valley. The Roman commanders were expecting this Second Punic War to be fought in Spain and North Africa but, instead, Hannibal had taken them by surprise on their home ground.

The Roman commander Longus rushed from southern Italy to meet the oncoming foe only to be caught in a trap set by Hannibal at the Trebbia River; his troops were cut to pieces. The other Roman consul Flaminius was caught in a similar trap at Lake Trasimene. In each case, Hannibal, through the use of scouts and spies, had a superior topographical knowledge and an insight into the psychological state of the opposing commander. He knew they wanted to vindicate the honor of the legions and he used this to lure them into his deadly traps. A typical example of this type of psychological warfare will illustrate Hannibal's cleverness and sophistication. The Roman commander Fabius Maximus had such little success against Hannibal, the rumor spread that he had been paid off by the Carthaginians. Hannibal's scouts picked up on these rumors and Hannibal deliberately avoided Fabius' estates while burning everything around them. This added to the rumors and made Fabius so conscious of the damage done to his own credibility, he signed his lands over to the state to prevent any further suggestion of bribery.

Hannibal's spies operated not only in Roman military camps but in the Roman capital itself. The historian Livy tells us that at least one of these spies was caught and had his hands cut off. Hannibal's other spies remained undetected and continued to report back about the serious division in the Roman leadership. One party favored meeting Hannibal head-on while the other preferred to keep its distance and continue the game of cat and mouse that had been begun by Fabius. Hannibal lured them once more into direct contact on the battlefield and it resulted in his greatest victory on Italian soil—on the fields at Cannae. Using a double envelopment maneuver, which has become famous among military historians, the Carthaginians were able to kill more than 50,000 Roman troops in just over five hours of battle. It is said that the signet rings from the slain Roman officials measured three bushels full.

Hannibal fought his way down to southern Italy but was never able to lure the Romans back into a major confrontation. Still, he used numerous ploys to trick the Romans and take cities by subterfuge rather than force. He negotiated with his agents in the oc-

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cupied city of Tarentum, for example, and by means of secret signals arranged for them to open the gates so that he could take the city at night.

Hannibal was not patient with those who did not provide him with accurate intelligence. When he asked guides to take him to Casinum, they misunderstood and took him instead to Casilinum. The terrain there was such that Hannibal was nearly trapped. He rounded up the guides and had them crucified!

In the flaps and seals department, Hannibal was an expert at forging documents. He once sent a letter to the Roman commander Fabius forged to look like it had come from the leading citizens of Metapontum. It assured the commander that the city would surrender to him as soon as the Roman army approached. If the Romans had not gotten unfavorable auspices and cancelled the march, they would have walked right into the ambush Hannibal had set up outside the city walls. Clearly, it was the gods who saved the Romans and not their own counter-intelligence people.

The Romans eventually caught on to these tricks. When Hannibal defeated and killed the Roman consul Marcellus, he immediately took the consul's ring. The Romans, remembering Hannibal's skill as a forger, acted swiftly and sent word to neighboring city states that Marcellus had died and his ring was in enemy hands. No letters supposedly written by Marcellus should be trusted. Just such a letter reached Salapia in the hands of a Roman deserter pretending to be Marcellus' messenger. The letter, sealed with the stolen ring, asked the Salapians to be ready for Marcellus' arrival. When the Roman deserters, impersonating an advanced guard, arrived they were led into the city and welcomed. The people of Salapia closed the gates behind them, then set upon and killed the deserters. The Salapians had been saved only by the advanced warning.

The Romans eventually produced a man who learned from Hannibal's tactics and was able to use them successfully against the Carthaginians. Publius Scipio was given the consular command in Spain at the age of 25. He drove out the Carthaginians in a final victory at Ilipa in 206 B.C. and then led an expeditionary force to Africa.

The site of the last Carthaginian/Roman encounter was at Zama in Tunisia. It is ironic that Hannibal's defeat began with a rare intelligence failure on his part. When his forces arrived, Hannibal immediately sent his spies out to discover the size of the Roman force. In particular, he wanted to know the strength of Scipio's

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cavalry since his own was still weak. The spies were caught, shown around the camp by Scipio, entertained and then sent back to Hannibal to report the supreme confidence of the Roman commander. The spies had seen no cavalry in camp and reported this disinformation. Scipio knew his cavalry reinforcements were actually only two days ride away and he wanted the spies' report to mislead Hannibal. Unaware of the approaching force, Hannibal met Scipio at Zama. The lack of cavalry proved fatal. The Romans annihilated the Carthaginian forces and the war which had begun in Italy 16 years before ended in defeat for the man who had been undefeated on Italian soil.

In the final analysis, Hannibal's intelligence service was one of his greatest assets. We are ignorant of how the network was organized or who the individual agents were, but it is clear that they kept their commander informed of Roman plans throughout the war. Tactically it enabled him to use deception as an effective weapon. Accurate battlefield information also permitted his flexible and coordinated maneuver of separate combat elements and speedy concentration of forces against points of Roman weakness. The one exception to this otherwise flawless record was Zama, where his decision to give battle was based on a false assumption made because his spies brought back inaccurate, or at least incomplete, information.

There are, of course, several other reasons for Hannibal's defeat. Most have to do with his strategic goals and the way the Carthaginian senate refused to support him late in the war. But in spite of his final failure, Hannibal's campaign in Italy remains one of antiquity's greatest achievements in military strategy. Hannibal's intelligence service deserves a large share of the credit.

The Romans never lost their fear of Hannibal, nor did Hannibal lose his ability to predict Roman movements. He continued his battle against them while in exile and it was not until 183 B.C. that Roman soldiers tracked him down in Bithynia. They hoped to kill him or bring him back to Rome as a central figure in a Roman triumph. The fact that the Romans would take the time to hunt down a 64 year old man in an obscure town on the Sea of Marmora proves that he was still a valuable symbol if not an actual threat to them. The Romans could never rest as long as he was alive, as even Hannibal knew. "Let us release the Romans," he said at the very end, "from their anxiety since they think it too long to wait for the death of an old man." When the Roman soldiers entered his villa, they found Hannibal dead—a suicide—to be once again, and for the last time, one step ahead of his enemy. ■

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ON FILE.....

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No British serviceman or police officer was safe on the streets at night, and terror reigned supreme on the sleepy, sunlit island of Cyprus. It was the mid-fifties and former Greek Army General George Grivas was waging a war with his guerrillas in the Troodos mountains for enosis, unity with mainland Greece.

The Turkish minority on the island did not want enosis, so the battle began, and Britain, with some later UN contingents, played the onerous role of mediator, becoming a victim in battle, too.

Somehow, Grivas was always one jump ahead of his enemy, as if he was peering through a crystal ball at the plans on the Commander-in-Chief's table in British headquarters. In fact, the wily old general had a better source of information than that. One of the shrewdest spies of the century was working in the C-in-C's office and he played his dual role so well that both sides commended his loyalty after the Emergency was over.

* * *

When the British arrived on the island of olive groves and vineyards, one of the first natives to approach them was 36 year-old Police Inspector George Lagoudontis. The Communists and guerrillas in the mountains, he said, were misunderstood men or dangerous lackeys of Moscow and Belgrade. They had to be taught a severe lesson and reminded of the loyalty owed by them to their own nation. He would help the British do this; spreading his hands with a charming smile, he volunteered his services.

The British were glad to have him. He spoke their language perfectly, Greek and Turkish, too, and would be invaluable not only as an interpreter and interrogator but as an informer as well, given his police contacts and access to criminal files.

They trusted George so much, he was given an office in the C-in-C's suite at headquarters, and every morning at 9:00 a.m., with Army, Police and RAF chiefs assembling for their staff conference, George smilingly ushered them through the chief's door. If information was needed during the conference, George would be called on the intercom, located on his own desk, to find it in the files, and soon this gave him an idea.

Smuggling in a miniature tape recorder, he hid it in his desk drawer. Then, staying late one night, he ran a wire from it through the telephone cable into the chief's conference room. Spliced yet again, that wire ended up behind the wall map in front of which conference personnel assembled to discuss each day's campaign...and there was a microphone on the end of it.

All he had to do, when daily conferences began, was switch on his tape recorder. The spool ran for 75 minutes, long enough to record the complete briefing. The spool was then dropped through the

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COME IN FROM THE COLD

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window to an accomplice waiting below and rushed by motorcycle to General Grivas. If time was vital, Lagoudontis simply phoned the general on a secret "hot line."

* * *

Inevitably, the Britons suspected a leak—but where? No one suspected the faithful, zealous Lagoudontis, and when they moved their conference room to the ground floor, he was invited to move with it.

This time he wedged his little recorder under the conference table. His trusted Greek sergeant, Aristide, also a double-agent, had to place pencils and paper before the service chiefs each morning when the conference began. It was a simple task to drop one pencil and switch on the recorder as he bent to pick it up.

Still baffled, the British searched their headquarters from roof to cellar, and Lagoudontis headed each swoop, "searching" the conference room himself. When they began making policemen sleep overnight in the conference room, that did not worry him. Sergeant Aristide volunteered for this task...

What gaps there might be in the daily information, George filled in when he invited senior officers to his home at night for drinks. As the whisky flowed, so did the information.

To confuse the British even more, he got his friend General Grivas to add his name to the EOKA list of pro-British "traitors" who should be shot on sight. The British response to this was to allow George to carry a gun. Had he wished, he could have assassinated the C-in-C with it.

Apart from the daily conference reports, his coups for Grivas included: copies of all secret papers in the safe, which he opened with a duplicate key made from a wax impression; the Grivas dossier which he filched from the confidential files; duplicate keys to all other cabinets of classified information, and photographs and dossiers on all British Special Branch leaders and agents operating on the island. Small wonder that Grivas promoted him to the rank of Chief of EOKA Intelligence.

* * *

When, after six years of bitter contention, Cyprus finally got independence, but not unity with Greece, Grivas vanished from the scene and so, in time, did the British.

George stayed on in the Cyprus Police, rising to the rank of Chief Superintendent. It was only many years later that the British realised how successfully he had duped them, and a Colonel in Cyprus at the time recalled ruefully: "I'm not surprised George gave us that Mona Lisa smile when he invited us in every morning. I'm wondering now what La Giaconda had on Leonardo da Vinci."

George admitted later that he had been wrong in backing Grivas though it seemed the right thing

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to do at the time. But he never put a finger directly on a British serviceman or police officer, nor did he plant a bomb in the HQ. "I could not do that to my colleagues, British or Cypriot," he said. "I liked them all too much!"

The feeling seems to have been mutual. His treasured possessions were a commendation for loyal service to the Queen from the last British Governor-General on the island, and another from Grivas "for great service to our country." ■

COMING NEXT ISSUE

INTERVIEW/PROFILE: KEN FOLLETT

DUCK SOUP, by Catherine Logan
The day started all wrong . . .

CLAY PIGEON, by William Arden
A mission that needed to succeed to fail, to fail to succeed, to . . .

Isak Romun and a little bit of humanity . . .

Science fiction by Andrew Offutt

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WHO MADE ME?

Match the writer with his secret agent-hero.

Fredric Davies	Boysie Oakes
E. Howard Hunt	Dr. Jason Love
James Dark	John Craig
Donald Hamilton	Hugh North
Mickey Spillane	Peter Ward
James Munro	Emily Pollifax
F. Van Wyck Mason	Matthew Helm
James Leasor	Tiger Mann
Dorothy Gilman	Mark Hood
John Gardner	Napolean Solo

Serrett's Scramble: SPY NOVELS

The following letter sequences are actually the titles of popular spy novels that have been scrambled. Unscramble the letters and fill in the titles of the novels in the spaces provided.

1) T H E E I G H T H O L D A G E N T M N N W U (by Ian Fleming)

_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

2) T T H E M I L E R A C E R C A S E (By Robert Ludlum)

_____ _____ _____

3) T H E S T R A N G E P R O M T E R M S B F U (by Ken Follett)

_____ _____ _____ ___ _____

4) C A L L I N A F A T S P Y C G H (by Len Deighton)

_____ _ _____ _____

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BONUS

What do the following letter sequences ALL have in common with "Serrett's Scramble?"

1) T H E C A M E R A L I E S T R E C
2) A S E C R E T A R T I C L E H M E
3) H E R A T T I C S C R E A M E E L
4) C I T E T H E A R M S R A C E L E

SPY RECRUITMENT

During the early thirties, Anthony Blunt was recruited to the cause of what has become the KGB by Guy Burgess. In the course of his interrogation in later years, Blunt described just how Burgess had gone about the recruitment:

1 18 24 17 10 18 20 - 16 8 - 21 11 19 24 - 12 10 -
19 10 21 8 24 17 9 18 13 - 24 10 - 2 10 11 18 24
8 22 - 24 17 8 - 17 10 22 22 10 22 19 - 10 3 -
18 1 25 9 19 21 - 16 8 - 2 1 18 24 - 9 11 19 24 -
19 9 24 - 17 8 22 8 - 1 18 12 - 24 1 14 4 -
1 7 10 11 24 - 9 24 - 24 17 8 - 13 10 6 8 22 18
21 8 18 24 - 9 19 - 5 1 2 9 3 20 9 18 13 - 17
9 24 14 8 22 - 19 10 - 21 1 22 23 9 19 21 - 9 19 -
24 17 8 - 10 18 14 20 - 19 10 14 11 24 9 10 18 -
9 - 1 21 - 1 14 22 8 1 12 20 - 2 10 21 21 9 24
24 8 12 - 24 10 - 16 10 22 4 - 19 8 2 22 8 24 14
20 - 3 10 22 - 5 8 1 2 8 - 1 22 8 - 20 10 11 -
5 22 8 5 1 22 8 12 - 24 10 - 17 8 14 5 - 21 8

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SOLUTION TO "WHO MADE ME"

Fredric Davis	Napolean Solo
E. Howard Hunt	Peter Ward
James Dark	Mark Hood
Donald Hamilton	Matthew Helm
Mickey Spillane	Tiger Mann
James Munro	John Craig
F. Van Wyck Mason	Hugh North
James Leasor	Dr. Jason Love
Dorothy Gilman	Emily Pollifax
John Gardner	Boysie Oakes

Information courtesy The Cold War File, by Andy East, The Scarecrow Press Inc., 1983

Solution to "Serrett's Scramble"

1) THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN
2) THE MATARESE CIRCLE
3) THE MAN FROM ST. PETERSBURG
4) CATCH A FALLING SPY

Solution to Bonus

Bonus Answer: All are additional variations of Ludlum's THE MATARESE CIRCLE.

SOLUTION TO "SPY RECRUITMENT:

A-1 B-7 C-2 D-12 E-8 F-3 G-13 H-17 IJ-9 K-4 L-14 M-21 N-18 0-10 P-5 Qu-15 R-22 S-19 T-24 U-11 V-6 W-16 X-23 Y-20 Z-25

"Anthony, we must do something to counter the horrors of Nazism. We can't just sit here and talk about it. The government is pacifying Hitler, so Marxism is the only solution. I am already committed to work secretly for peace. Are you prepared to help me?"

Information courtesy Their Trade Is Treachery, by Chapman Pincher, Bantam Books 1982.

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Did you know...

The Allies took a lot of time and trouble in selecting spies and secret agents from the well-educated classes, to drop behind enemy lines in France, in the belief that politeness and good manners might be of more value than some basic animal cunning.

Sadly, some of these too-perfect gentlemen were quickly betrayed . . . by themselves.

German counter-espionage agents were quick to spot the discrepancy in men dressed in peasant or workmen's clothes, in agricultural or industrial areas, speaking French with Oxford and German university accents.

Agents would have been better chosen from people speaking regional patois and dialects, but many patriotic Frenchmen, refugees in England, who volunteered for this hazardous work, were ignored, either because they were thought to be double-agents, or through a stupid strata of class distinction running through the spy selection system at the time.

Some other interesting things that betrayed the too perfect spy are recalled by Horst Decker, a military policeman in the German Army who was stationed in the Vosges towards the end of the war, looking for agents parachuting to the Resistance: an inability to talk round a cigarette kept permanently in the mouth, a well-known peasant habit; holding a cigarette Engl[illegible]e between the first two fingers instead of pinching [illegible] forefinger and thumb; failing to dunk bread in so[illegible]ee bowls; using a fork in the right hand; and [illegible] pushing a cycle from the left side instead of the [illegible].

Agents were tripped up by all these elementary errors, from time to time, but the most amusing one Decker recalls concerns a suspect arrested near Epinal. "His accent was perfect and his papers all in order, but then I remembered the Englishman's abhorrence to garlic and asked him to breathe on me.

"That did it! His breath was sweet and clear!"

The agent was due to be shot next morning but escaped in an air raid. Says Decker: "I was rather glad about that, because he was a charming fellow!"

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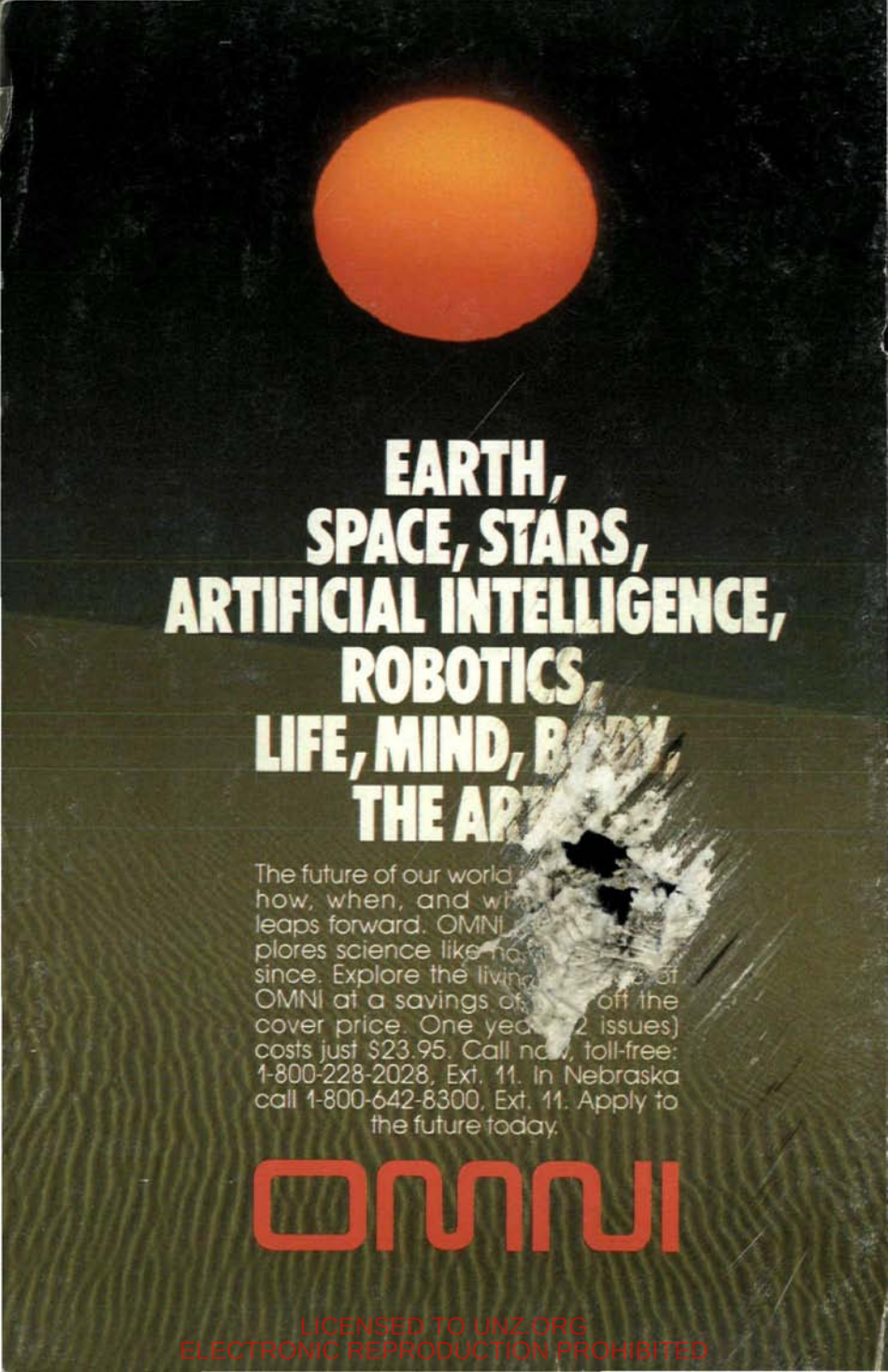

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